Commentary
December 2003

Among the Arabs

Efraim Karsh
Joshua Muravchik
Robert Satloff
Steven Vincent

A Guide to Schwarzenegger Country

James Q. Wilson

In Arthur Miller's America

Carol Iannone

El Greco and His Critics

Steven C. Munson

King of the Jazz Age

Terry Teachout

Books in Review

Victor Davis Hanson • Christopher Caldwell • Kay S. Hymowitz
Jacob Heilbrunn • Mark Falcoff

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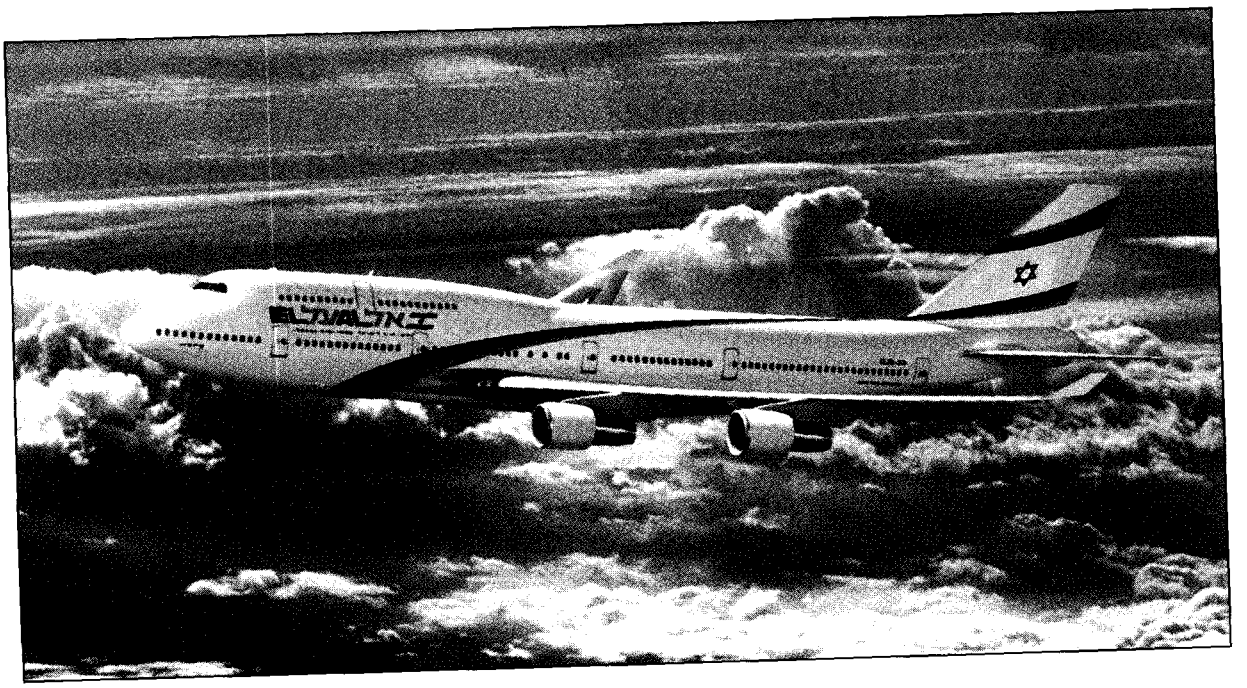

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Commentary

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December 2003

Letters from Readers

Neocons

To the Editor:

By his compressed joining of some of the writers for the *Public Interest* on domestic policy and Commentary on foreign policy, Joshua Muravchik gives a somewhat misleading account of the origins in the 1970's of the term "neoconservative" ["The Neoconservative Cabal," September].

I was the co-founder and co-editor (unnamed by Mr. Muravchik) with Irving Kristol of the *Public Interest*. In a joint statement in our first issue, we stated that we were "anti-ideological," and discarded prefabricated views of reality. Norman Podhoretz, when he became the editor of Commentary, rejected that point of view. As he wrote in *Making It* (1967):

> Daniel Bell and Irving Kristol proposed to shape my thinking in accordance with what Bell called "the ladder of practicality." Bell and Kristol were to found a new magazine of their own, the *Public Interest*, in line with this principle. Thanks to Kristol's great editorial talents and Bell's insatiable curiosity, it was to be much better than a company suggestion box, but it would still operate, like the art of politics itself, strictly within the limits of the immediately possible. Quite apart from my theoretical objection to their notion that "ideology" was dead [and the] belief that the system under which we were living in America was the best a fallible human nature was likely to build . . . I did not believe that intellectual discourse . . . need limit itself so masochistically in order to be "relevant" or influential.

Almost all the economic articles in our first five years were written by Robert M. Solow, Thomas Schelling, Robert Heilbroner, and Edwin Kuh. These men were social democrats, as was I (and as was Mr. Muravchik's father Emmanuel, former director of the Jewish Labor Committee). In 1972, Irving Kristol decided to declare publicly for Richard Nixon. I thought that continuing as co-editor would be difficult, and I resigned, telling Irving that friendship was more important than ideology, a view that Podhoretz contests in *Ex-Friends* (1999).

In his first years as editor of Commentary, Podhoretz had gone Left and featured such writers as Paul Goodman and Staughton Lynd, a militant labor activist. By the late 1960's and early 1970's he had begun moving Right. At the end of the 70's he published an essay by Jeane Kirkpatrick (then a Democrat) to the effect that authoritarian regimes could evolve politically, peacefully, while totalitarian regimes could not—a view brought to the attention of Ronald Reagan that led to her appointment as U.S. ambassador to the UN.

On another matter, Mr. Muravchik disputes the argument that Leon Trotsky and the "theory of permanent revolution" were relevant sources of neoconservatism. On that he is right, but I should add that the theory was not coined by Trotsky.

Its author was a Russian revolutionary who used the name Parvus (his real name was Helphand). By the turn of the century, Parvus had written brilliant Marxist articles that impressed August Bebel, Karl Kautsky, Rosa Luxembourg, and Lenin, and he had become Trotsky's mentor. In the 1905 revolution, Parvus and Trotsky sought to establish a workers' soviet, which failed. Parvus prophesied that the industrial states would come to a world war, and that this would be the opportunity for revolutionists to telescope events in order to seize power. This would be an ongoing world process—a permanent revolution.

Daniel Bell
Cambridge, Massachusetts

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TO THE EDITOR:

In "The Neoconservative Cabal," where I am described as "looking as Jewish as [my] name sounds," Joshua Muravchik asks whether neoconservatives are mostly Jews. The answer is yes, at least according to their hagiographer, Mark Gerson, author of *The Neoconservative Vision*. In that respect, neoconservatism is quite distinct from other U.S. political tendencies or movements, with the exception of various Trotskyist and other leftist sectarians. But unlike the latter, neoconservatives are highly visible and, especially under the Bush administration, have enjoyed unprecedented influence.

Mr. Muravchik also asks whether Israeli interests have been a priority in the neoconservative outlook. One can find a wide range of foreign-policy opinions among neoconservatives, but a fervent commitment to Israel's security is among the few universally shared fundamental principles. For more than 30 years, neoconservatives have called for a strategic alliance between Israel and the U.S.—even at the expense of other U.S. allies—based on the presumed commonality of their interests. "America's fate and Israel's fate are one and the same," William J. Bennett said recently. Is it "pander[ing] to anti-Semitism" (as Mr. Muravchik puts it) to note that this view distinguishes neoconservatives from other national-security hawks?

Mr. Muravchik's assessment of a 1996 paper prepared by a group of neoconservatives for incoming Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, which argued that Iraq was the key to tipping the balance of power in the Middle East in Israel's favor, is disingenuous. The seven people he cites as mere "attendees" at a conference were actually members of a "Study Group on a New Israeli Strategy Toward 2000" chaired by Richard Perle and sponsored by a private, Israel-based institute that credits him with authorship.

Mr. Muravchik suggests that this task force, in calling for Israel's support for ousting Saddam Hussein, may have been "trying to influence Israeli policy on behalf of American interests." But he fails to mention that the paper, "A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm," was a guide for how Netanyahu could not only destroy the Oslo peace process but also persuade Washington to abandon the "land-for-peace" formula on which U.S. policy in the region has been based since 1967.

Finally, Mr. Muravchik is probably right that the BBC described me as a "long-standing opponent of anti-Semitism" to protect itself against predictable charges of anti-Semitism. That said, what has long most distressed me about neoconservatives is precisely their eagerness to denounce criticism from the Left of themselves and of Likud-led Israeli governments as anti-Semitism while at the same time defending, if not actively supporting, their own anti-Semitic allies on the Right—be they the murderous neo-Nazi military junta in Argentina, Afghan "freedom fighters," or leaders of the Christian Right whose devotion to Israel, in the eyes of neoconservatives, invariably trumps their abiding and deep-seated distrust of Jews. Writing in support of Jerry Falwell and the "moral majority" in these pages almost twenty years ago, Irving Kristol noted, "It is their theology, but it is our Israel."

If anything empowers anti-Semitism, it is that kind of devil's bargain. If Mr. Muravchik wonders about an "ulterior motive" for my concern about neoconservatism, he need look no further.

JIM LOBE
Takoma Park, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR:

Joshua Muravchik is unhappy with various writers (myself included) who have tried to show the influence of Straussians and former Trotskyists on neoconservatism. He thinks we are guilty of "ancestor hunting," finding obscure intellectual sources to explain contemporary ideas.

Mr. Muravchik should take up his complaint not with me but with Irving Kristol. In his indispensable 1995 collection, *Neoconservatism: Autobiography of an Idea*, Kristol pays lavish attention to the formative impact of his youthful days as a Trotskyist and to his slightly more mature encounters with Strauss. Here is Kristol on the "frequent debates" among Trotskyists he often attended: "I have never since seen or heard their equal, and, as a learning experience for college students, they were beyond comparison." Aside from Kristol, there were many other future neoconservatives who received their political education at the school of Trotsky: Gertrude Himmelfarb, Seymour Martin Lipset, Martin Diamond, Albert Wohlstetter, and (in a younger generation) Stephen Schwartz, among others.

As for Strauss, Kristol writes: "Encountering Strauss's work produced the kind of intellectual shock that is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. He turned one's intellectual universe upside down." Again, a long list can be made of other neoconservative writers influenced by Strauss. Riffling through back issues of COMMENTARY and the *Public Interest*, I came across articles by Walter Berns, Werner Dannhauser, Allan Bloom, Robert Goldwin, Harvey Mansfield, Thomas Pangle, Clifford Orwin, and Leon Kass, each of whom was either a student of Strauss or strongly influenced by his teaching.

On a more personal note, I must point out that Mr. Muravchik gives a very distorted interpretation of my *Boston Globe* article on Strauss. He states that I portray Strauss as an "authoritarian," and he has "the impression" that I learned what I know of Strauss "from a polemical book by one Shadia Drury." (Drury has written two books on Strauss, not one, as Mr. Muravchik seems to think. The second is indeed polemical, but I have talked to some Straussians who admire the first.)

Strauss's followers describe him as a friend of liberal democracy, although not quite a liberal democrat. Strauss's critics, however, think there is something profoundly anti-democratic in his thought. *Pace* Mr. Muravchik, Shadia Drury is not the most prominent critic of Strauss on these grounds. Long ago, Hannah Arendt accused Strauss of being an enemy of liberal democracy, and more recently the political theorist Stephen Holmes has taken up the same line.

My article attempted to

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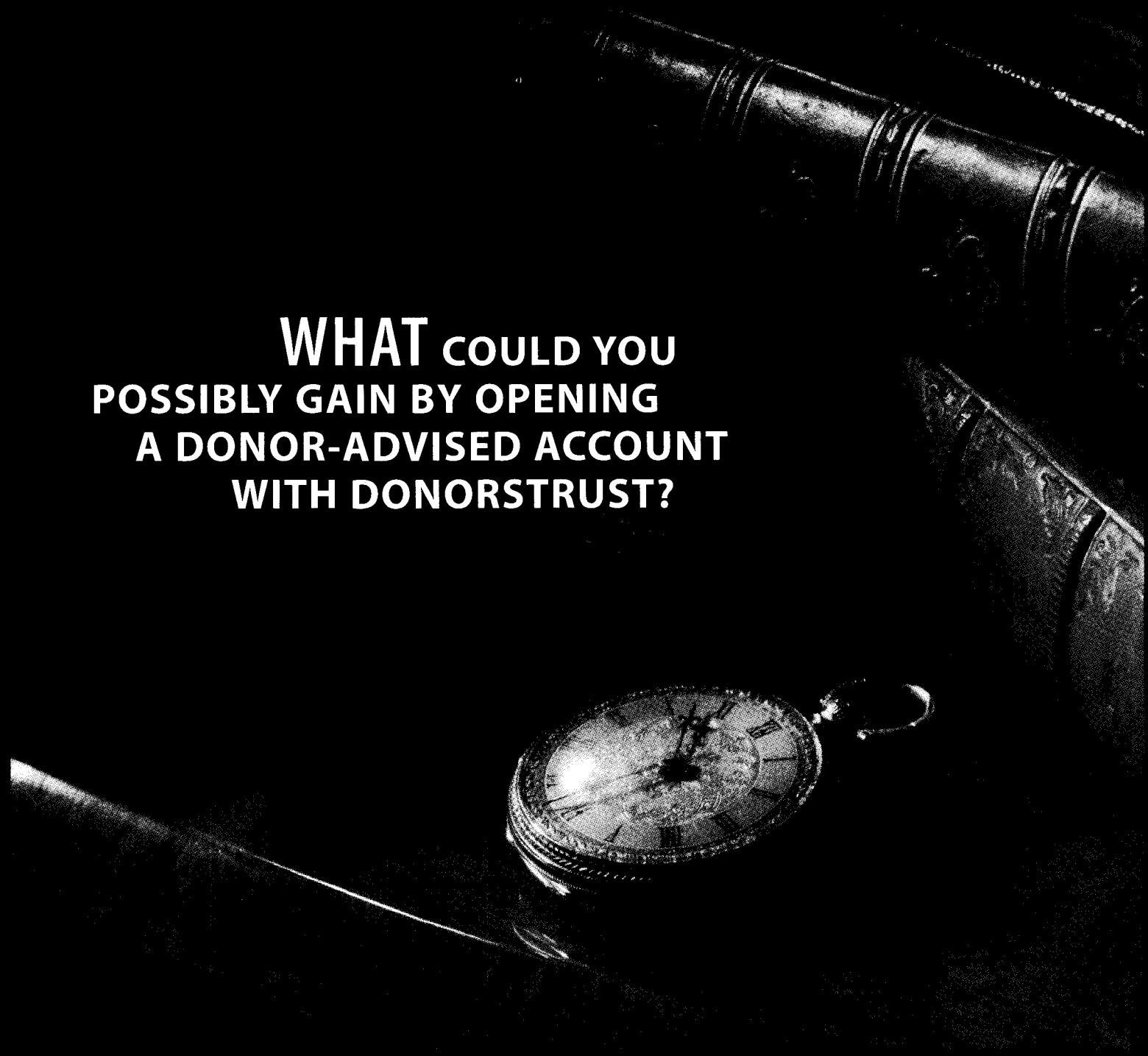

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provide a balanced assessment by presenting the arguments of both Strauss's admirers and his critics. In researching it, I not only read deeply into Strauss's writing but also interviewed several Straussians—Stanley Rosen, Clifford Orwin, and Robert Goldwin—and my piece gave the friends of Strauss a fair hearing.

Readers can get a sense of the balance I tried to strike by looking at my conclusion: "But just how 'sinister' was Leo Strauss himself?" I asked.

> The answer depends on how a reader approaches his books. If you read Strauss with a well-disposed spirit, he can be interpreted as a genuine friend of American liberal democracy. He worked to create an elite that was strong, sober, and sufficiently free of illusions about the goodness of man to fight the totalitarian enemies of liberal democracy—be they fascists, Communists, or Islamicist fundamentalists.
>
> But if you read Strauss with a skeptical mind, the way he himself read the great philosophers, a more disturbing picture takes shape. Strauss, by this view, emerges as a disguised Machiavelli, a cynical teacher who encouraged his followers to believe that their intellectual superiority entitles them to rule over the bulk of humanity by means of duplicity. The worst thing you can do to Leo Strauss, perhaps, is to read his books with Straussian eyes.

Mr. Muravchik gives a truncated quotation from the last paragraph, creating the false impression that my article was a hatchet-job on Strauss. With his weak reading skills, if Mr. Muravchik took a class on Strauss's ideas, he would earn a C minus.

Finally, Mr. Muravchik raises the ugly specter of anti-Semitism in an uncharacteristically murky way. Could he explain exactly who, among the writers he mentions, is an anti-Semite? And what evidence does Mr. Muravchik have to support this grave accusation?

JEET HEER
Toronto, Canada

TO THE EDITOR:

Joshua Muravchik offers a valuable antidote to the conspiracy theories that have proliferated about neoconservatives over the past year. But in debunking the more fanciful claims about neoconservative motives, he goes astray in dismissing the influence of Leon Trotsky and Leo Strauss on the movement.

Mr. Muravchik is quite right to pooh-pooh any direct connection between Trotsky and figures like Douglas Feith, R. James Woolsey, and Richard Perle. But Trotsky *was* an important intellectual figure for the founding fathers of the neoconservative movement like Elliot E. Cohen (the first editor of COMMENTARY) and Sidney Hook. For a host of New York intellectuals, Trotsky provided what seemed at the time like a sophisticated alternative to Stalin. In this regard, Trotskyism can be seen as a pit-stop on the way to the all-out rejection of Communism championed by Hook, Cohen, Irving Kristol, and others after World War II. The fact that the Trotskyist past has been wielded as a cudgel against neoconservatives—beginning, I think, not with John B. Judis (as Mr. Muravchik suggests) but rather with Sidney Blumenthal in *The Rise of the Counter-Establishment*—should not prompt them to disown it.

Something similar might be said about Leo Strauss. Mr. Muravchik correctly observes that Strauss was anything but a politico. But his unworldliness did not mean that he was oblivious to the threat posed by totalitarianism to the West. Strauss, whose hero was Winston Churchill, did provide a kind of "political counsel." Much of Strauss's writing—*On Tyranny* in particular—was a warning, implicit and explicit, about the flaccidity of liberal democracy in the face of fascism and Communism, something he witnessed firsthand when Weimar Germany collapsed. No less a neoconservative than Daniel Patrick Moynihan was influenced by Strauss in the 1970's as ambassador to the United Nations at a moment when the third world had become virulently anti-Israel and anti-American.

Nor is it quite right to assert, as Mr. Muravchik does, that Strauss did not believe in an elite. He declared that he was training "princes" who could make a special contribution to liberal democracy, but who would not enjoy unique privileges. In a 1959 speech, for instance, he observed that "Liberal education is the necessary endeavor to found an aristocracy within democratic mass society."

Obviously, Strauss does not provide a blueprint for neoconservatism. But it seems fair to say that while not all neoconservatives are Straussians, almost all Straussians are neoconservatives. All of which suggests that neoconservativism may be more complicated than some of its adversaries care to admit.

JACOB HEILBRUNN
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

A certain defensiveness tinges Joshua Muravchik's efforts to repel the genteel anti-Semitic suggestions that the war against terror is a Zionist concoction. These claims are so disconnected from reality that one wonders why they must engage one's time at all.

Jews in public life should not feel a necessity to defend themselves from personal feelings of attachment to Israel—quite aside from the fact of its strong support of the United States and Western values and its undertaking of military action only under demonstrable threat to its existence—any more than anyone in this country of immigrants should feel dissuaded from attachment to his or her ethnic or national roots. It serves Jews ill, and even endangers them, to strike too defensive a stance.

FREDERIC WILE
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

I am surprised that Joshua Muravchik's otherwise excellent piece fails to mention America's leading anti-Semitic columnist—Patrick Buchanan and his rag the *American Conservative*. It was he, I believe, who gave the term "neoconservative" a dark and sinister meaning and made it into a new codeword for "yid."

I used to believe that Buchanan hated Jews because so many were liberals and he (rightly) blamed liberals for many of society's problems. When some Jews woke up and abandoned liberalism, one might have thought that Buchanan would have welcomed them

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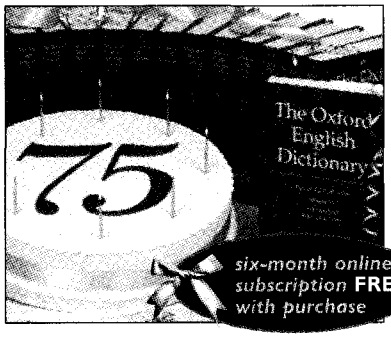

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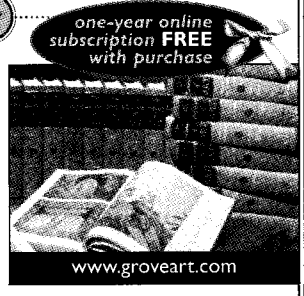

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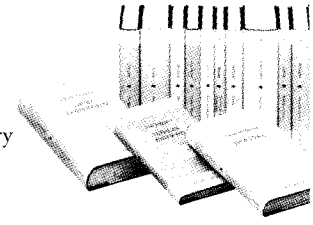

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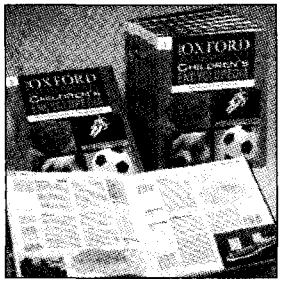

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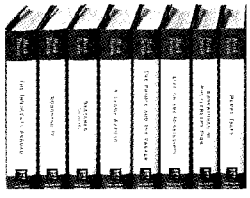

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with open arms. Instead, he hates them for their impurity—sort of like the New Christians in medieval Spain.

In Buchanan's warped mind, these neoconservatives are lurking in the State and Defense Departments and are manipulating Bush into fighting wars that are only in the interest of Israel—never mind what happened on September 11, 2001. At any moment I expect to see a revised edition of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* with a new introduction by Buchanan and a distorted picture of Paul Wolfowitz on its cover.

PETER A. SCHNEIDER
Harrington Park, New Jersey

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK writes:

My apologies to Daniel Bell for omitting his part as a founder of the *Public Interest*. The omission, however, is immaterial to the story of the neoconservatives since Mr. Bell was not and is not one—as his brief recapitulation of his differences with Irving Kristol and Norman Podhoretz seems designed to underscore.

Readers will appreciate Mr. Bell's disquisition on Parvus/Helphand (also known sometimes as Gelfand and, on account of his girth, as "Dr. Elephant" to Kautsky's children). Parvus and Trotsky did indeed collaborate closely in 1905 and for a time afterward, though by 1917 Parvus would play a very different role, persuading the German general staff to insinuate Lenin back into Russia to derail the February Revolution.

While Parvus apparently led in the formulation of the theory of permanent revolution, it was Trotsky's name that became attached to it. This has been taken as grist by the conspiracy-theorists who claim that neoconservatism is a form of Trotskyism. Regardless of authorship, what was distinct about the theory was not its internationalism, a notion inherent in all Marxism, but the idea that different historical stages could somehow occur simultaneously. What all of this has to do with neoconservatives is of course precisely nothing.

In any event, by rescuing Parvus from obscurity, Mr. Bell may have paved the way for yet a new set of revelations, tracing the origins of neoconservatism to the Jew Parvus and alleging, perhaps, that neocons are trying to subvert the Arab world for the benefit of Israel just as Parvus helped to subvert Russia for the benefit of Germany.

Pace JIM LOBE, I did not ask whether most neoconservatives were Jews. I asserted that many were and others were not. Neither I nor Mr. Lobe nor any source he wishes to invoke can say what the proportion is because there is no agreed roster of neoconservatives or any agreed criteria for inclusion on it.

But Mr. Lobe is dead wrong in claiming that the high proportion of Jews distinguishes neoconservatism from other political currents. The Communist and Socialist parties, the 1960's New Left, reform Democrats, the civil-rights movement, the ACLU—in short, almost every left-of-center political formation in America of recent memory—has counted substantial "disproportions" of Jews in its ranks. I do not know the reasons for this, but similar patterns have appeared outside the U.S., such as in the Russian revolutionary movements or the South African anti-apartheid camp. Right-wing extremists and anti-Semites, including notoriously the Nazis, have seized on these demographic facts to paint the Communists, socialists, liberals, race-mixers, or whatever as at bottom Jewish conspiracies aimed at serving Jewish interests—much as Mr. Lobe now tries to paint neoconservatism.

In pushing this accusation, Mr. Lobe claims that a commitment to Israel's security "is among the few universally shared fundamental principles" of neoconservatives. This weaves a small truth into a big lie. To be sure, there is a strong commitment to Israel's security. But the points of agreement among neocons are hardly few; the only reason we have the word "neocon" is that a rather small group of people came to share a broad outlook.

What defined the neoconservatives *ab initio* was their hawkish approach to the cold war, support for defense spending, skepticism toward détente and arms pacts with Communist states, advocacy of the Reagan doctrine, and the like. In the post-Soviet era, neocons have continued to be "hardliners" vis-à-vis imminent or potential threats from China, North Korea, Islamism, Serbian expansionism, and international terrorism, and they have taken a highly internationalist view of America's security interests.

Any fair-minded reading would see the neocons' defense of Israel as part of this broader worldview. As a Jew, I would never deny that Israel holds a special place in my heart, but this scarcely distinguishes me from Jewish liberals who are foreign-policy *doves*. What does distinguish me—what makes me a "neocon" and binds me to others of the same ilk—is that I am no less adamant about the security of, say, Taiwan or Poland.

With regard to the 1996 paper, it is not I but Mr. Lobe who is being disingenuous. The so-called "study group" was a one-meeting affair. The BBC, guided by Mr. Lobe, claimed that Richard Perle and others "wrote" the document. But the document itself makes clear that the function of those named was much more tenuous. It says: "The main substantive ideas in this paper emerged from a discussion in which prominent opinion makers, including Richard Perle, James Colbert, Charles Fairbanks, Jr., Douglas Feith, Robert Loewenberg, David Wurmser, and Meyrav Wurmser participated." Furthermore, although Mr. Lobe gives the impression that the paper was something done at Netanyahu's request, in truth it was an uninvited effort to lobby Netanyahu, and there is no evidence that he ever read it or heard of it.

Worse still, Mr. Lobe's assertion—which lies at the heart of the conspiracy theory—that the paper "argued that Iraq was the key to tipping the balance of power in the Middle East in Israel's favor" is made up out of whole cloth. The paper puts first emphasis on Israel's relations with Turkey, Jordan, the Palestinians, and the United States. After many paragraphs on these subjects, it turns to Syria and Lebanon, then Saudi Arabia. Two-thirds of the way through, a single one of the paper's 29 paragraphs discusses Iraq. It reads, in its entirety:

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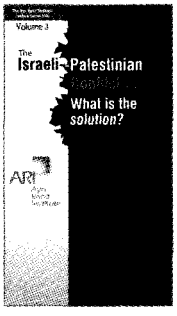

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Why Do They Hate Us? By Yaron Brook

America is hated by millions of people throughout the world—as is particularly evident in the Middle East. That seething hatred is often explained by reference to America's support of Israel, or the presence of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia or, more generally, on the West's past colonialism. All of these popular explanations, however, are false.

In this provocative talk Dr. Yaron Brook argues that the real cause of that hatred lies in the fundamental ideas espoused by the people and the intellectuals of the Middle East. What we face is a cultural war, a struggle between diametrically opposed ideologies. Knowing the nature and motivations of our enemies is crucial to vanquishing them.

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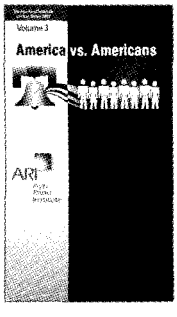

America vs. Americans By Leonard Peikoff

From its beginning, America has stood for the ideals of the Enlightenment: reason, individual rights, capitalism, the pursuit of happiness. The dominant trends in America today, however—trends endorsed not only by our leadership, but seemingly by the public at large—represent the opposite of these ideals. In his talk Dr. Leonard Peikoff explores this contradiction, along with our current moral cowardice, giving special emphasis to foreign policy.

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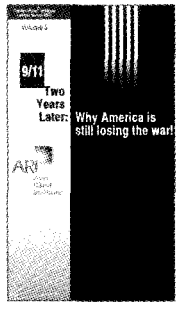

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Assessing the nearly two-year-long War on Terrorism, Dr. Yaron Brook of the Ayn Rand Institute will argue that, despite some progress, the war is falling short of its goal—the eradication of Islamic terrorism against the West. Dr. Brook will examine the ways in which the war is failing to curb the growth of militant Islam, the ideology behind the terrorists. He will discuss the situation today in Iraq and in the rest of the Middle East. And he will look at the reasons for the Bush Administration's inadequate response to terrorism and identify some steps necessary for winning the war decisively.

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Since Iraq's future could affect the strategic balance in the Middle East profoundly, it would be understandable that Israel has an interest in supporting the Hashemites in their efforts to redefine Iraq, including such measures as: visiting Jordan as the first official state visit, even before a visit to the United States, of the new Netanyahu government; supporting King Hussein by providing him with some tangible security measures to protect his regime against Syrian subversion; encouraging—through influence in the U.S. business community—investment in Jordan to structurally shift Jordan's economy away from dependence on Iraq; and diverting Syria's attention by using Lebanese opposition elements to destabilize Syrian control of Lebanon.

Mr. Lobe's concluding point is of a piece with his dishonest method throughout. He claims that neocons hurl false charges of anti-Semitism, but he offers not a single example. He claims they were "allies" of the Argentine junta, which is a sheer concoction. Apparently he means to suggest by this that neocons are so faithful to the Right that they will overlook anti-Semitism within it. But when so stalwart an anti-Communist as Patrick J. Buchanan took after the Jews, the ones who called him on it most sharply were neocons like A. M. Rosenthal, Norman Podhoretz, and myself. In a similar spirit, and again without offering a shred of evidence, Mr. Lobe tars the entire Christian Right with an "abiding and deep-seated distrust of Jews."

Contrary to Mr. Lobe's smear, the neocons have a record of remarkable consistency in their foreign-policy views regardless of "Jewish interests," and in their opposition to anti-Semitism regardless of ideological interests. Ironically, Mr. Lobe reveals himself to be quite the opposite: a man who will play fast and loose with anti-Semitism according to the dictates of his ideological position. At one moment he lays broad-brush charges of anti-Semitism and at the next he shamelessly encourages anti-Semitism: whatever it takes to strike a blow against those to his Right.

JEET HEER quotes Irving Kristol on the heuristic value of the Trotskyist debates to which he was party some 60 years ago. Kristol, as I wrote, was the one major neocon figure who had a significant dalliance with Trotskyism. Mr. Heer throws up several other names of people he says "received their political education at the school of Trotsky." But even granting the debatable premise that these people all deserve to be called neocons (it is doubtful that Diamond, Lipset, or Wohlstetter ever accepted such a label), Mr. Heer's characterization of their relation to Trotskyism is a gross exaggeration (except perhaps in the case of Schwartz).

Diamond was an expert on American constitutional theory with a special interest in the electoral college. Did his knowledge and insight concerning this subject come from studying how Trotsky apportioned the Petrograd soviet? Wohlstetter was a master of nuclear-weapons strategy. Was this owing to the lessons learned from Trotsky's tactics as commander of the Red Army?

In short, Mr. Heer is throwing up a smokescreen. The point of his article was to link the war in Iraq to the influence of Trotskyism. Its headline read: "Trotsky's Ghost Wandering the White House: Influence of Bush Aides: Bolshevik's Writings Supported the Idea of Pre-emptive War." But none of the people Heer now adduces as students of Trotsky was active in the debate over the war, much less involved with formulating U.S. policy.

It is not I who has distorted the import of Mr. Heer's article on Leo Strauss, but rather Mr. Heer himself. He quotes two paragraphs from it that give alternative interpretations of Strauss's legacy. The canons of daily journalism may require such "balance," but readers can easily see that the balance is spurious—i.e., that a benign assessment of Strauss requires reading him with "well-disposed" (which is to say, credulous) eyes, whereas a skeptical reading (of a kind recommended, says Mr. Heer, by Strauss himself) leads to a far darker impression.

If this does not make it abundantly clear which side of the argument Mr. Heer wants his readers to understand is the accurate one, he spelled it out flatly in another paragraph of his article that he does not bother to quote here:

> While some Straussians dispute the idea that the master was a godless cynic, it does seem that Strauss wanted a regime where the elite lived by a code of stoic fortitude while governing over a population that subscribes to superstitious religious beliefs.

THE FACT that Trotskyism was being wielded as a cudgel against me, as Jacob Heilbrunn puts it, would not lead me to disown my Trotskyist past—if I had a Trotskyist past. Although I have been one of the neocons singled out in this respect by John Judis and Michael Lind, among others, that is merely emblematic of the larger fallaciousness of this issue. In truth, very few neocons had a Trotskyist past, and, as I have already indicated, none of them was an active participant in the debate over Iraq. It may be true, as Mr. Heilbrunn says, that some of the intellectual predecessors of neoconservatism went through Trotskyist episodes, but that is stretching things pretty thin.

Mr. Heilbrunn is right that, for these people, Trotskyism served as a kind of way-station on the road from Communism. But that is all it was, leaving no lasting imprint on their thought. I would be curious to see anyone able to specify what exactly in the ideas of Elliot E. Cohen or Sidney Hook reflected a lingering kernel of Trotskyism. Indeed, I would say the same for Kristol, notwithstanding the florid quotation Jeet Heer has given us about the peerless learning experience Kristol felt he had had as a young Trot.

Kristol's point was not that any tenet of Trotskyism retained validity in his eyes, but rather that the intense theoretical give-and-take was a fine form of mental calisthenics. Kristol even went so

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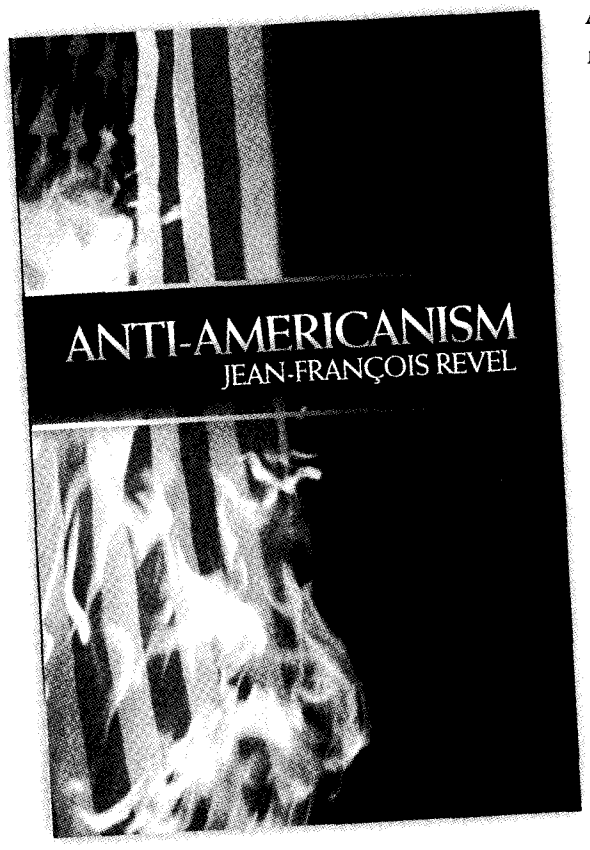
The French Disease



Angered by the increasing hostility against a nation he knows and admires, the distinguished French intellectual Jean-François Revel has come to America's defense in *Anti-Americanism*, a witty and erudite book that paradoxically spent several weeks late last year on top of the French best-seller list.

Author of *How Democracies Perish*, and other books that have had significant influence on both sides of the Atlantic, Revel focuses here on the notion that America is the source of all evil–imperialistic, greedy and ruthlessly competitive, a "cowboy nation" whose riches are acquired at the price of Third World impoverishment.

Here is what Revel says the anti-Americans, especially the French themselves, believe: "American society is entirely ruled by money. No other value, whether familial, moral, religious, civic, cultural, professional, or ethical has any potency in itself. Everything in America is a commodity, regarded and used exclusively for its material value. A person is judged solely by the worth of his bank account. Every U.S. President has been in the pockets of the oil companies, the military-industrial complex, the agricultural lobby, or the financial manipulators of Wall Street. America is the 'jungle' par excellence of out-of-control, 'savage' capitalism, where the rich are always becoming richer and fewer, while the poor are becoming poorer and more numerous. Poverty is the dominant social reality in America. Hordes of famished indigents are everywhere, while luxurious chauffeured limousines with darkened windows glide through the urban wilderness."

Revel shows how these charges ultimately stem from weakness and envy on the part of those who make them, and criticizes the legions of foreign propagandists and pseudo-intellectuals who make a living "bashing America." At a time when it seems that much of the world is marching against America, Revel shows what they are really marching against is freedom.

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far as to assess the exercise as "beyond comparison," although I suspect that his forebears and mine got much the same workout (and of a nobler kind) debating the arguments of the rabbis of the Talmud.

Contrary to Mr. Heilbrunn, nowhere did I assert that Strauss did not believe in an elite within a democracy. I rebutted some, like Jeet Heer, who have made Strauss out to be an advocate of some kind of elite-run, nondemocratic system. As for Mr. Heilbrunn's interesting claim that almost all Straussians are neoconservatives, I wonder how he knows.

To FREDERIC Wile's point that imputations of a Zionist conspiracy behind the war against terrorism are so "disconnected from reality" as to be better left unanswered, I can only say that accusations against Jews far more "disconnected" than this have caused grievous harm.

Thanks to Peter Schneider for a kind word. His observation that it was Buchanan who gave "neoconservative" its current spin is new to me but may be accurate. In the current discourse I believe that Buchanan has marginalized himself, but I have treated his anti-Semitism elsewhere (see my "Patrick J. Buchanan and the Jews," COMMENTARY, January 1991).

Fudging on China

TO THE EDITOR:

Arthur Waldron is right that last summer's enormous demonstrations in Hong Kong against new laws on subversion, treason, and sedition demolish Washington's wishful thinking about China and Hong Kong ["Hong Kong and the Future of Freedom," September]. The protests, Mr. Waldron believes, will force Beijing and Washington to make choices. "Fudging is impossible," he writes.

In fact, American policy in the region is based on fudging. Since 1997, the U.S. has declared that Hong Kong is autonomous so that it can maintain the fiction, dreamed up by Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, that China and Hong Kong are "one country" but "two systems." American officials even admit the charade. Shortly before the handover, one of them told the *New York Times* that our own stance would be to "pretend that Hong Kong isn't part of China, even though it is." The U.S. carefully avoids mentioning Beijing in connection with Hong Kong—even though Hong Kong's fate is tied to the mainland and, realistically, to a tolerance for political reform there. In the wake of the momentous protests showing the extreme dissatisfaction of Hong Kong's people with the way they are ruled, the U.S. stated its support for democracy "as envisioned by the Basic Law," even though the provisions of this Beijing-written "constitution" for Hong Kong make democracy practically impossible.

Beijing, meanwhile, has wasted no time in responding to the political defeat it experienced at the hands of the demonstrators. Its postponement of the legislation on treason and subversion, as required by Article 23 of the Basic Law, is not the victory for Hong Kong's people many would like to believe. Forging ahead with the unpopular legislation would have been disastrous for Hong Kong's pro-China political parties. One in particular, the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong, which holds six of the 24 democratically elected seats in the 60-seat legislature, would have suffered at the polls for taking the government's side.

There is no evidence that Beijing is contemplating further democratization in Hong Kong, let alone reform on the mainland. Nor is there reason to think that Washington will change its policy of accepting Beijing's plans for Hong Kong while fudging the truth about what it is doing.

ELLEN BORK
Project for the New American Century
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

Extraordinary developments have unfolded since the publication of Arthur Waldron's article. On September 5, Hong Kong's embattled chief executive, Tung Chee-hwa, was forced to withdraw Article 23, the controversial antisubversion legislation, two months after some 500,000 people took to the streets to oppose it. Tung declared that he would not introduce a new version of the bill until the government has consulted with the public and gained its support. This was truly amazing: for the first time in its 54-year history of brutalizing China, the Chinese Communist party backed down in the face of a popular movement.

Mr. Waldron argues correctly that Hong Kong will either be democratized or it will not. No merely tactical solution exists. As he writes, "Only full democratization—or full dictatorship—can restore something like equilibrium." But Beijing may still believe it can keep "fudging." State councilor Tang Jiaxuan said that many middle-class citizens took to the streets on July 1 because of their economic grievances, and that Hong Kong's problems could be addressed by boosting the economy. In fact, Beijing has started to pump money into Hong Kong by relaxing restrictions on visits by tourists from the mainland.

Nor does Beijing seem to be ready to get rid of Tung anytime soon. President Hu Jintao told Hong Kong business leaders to give their "all-out support" to Tung, and Politburo member Li Changchun told the media in Hong Kong that they too should support the chief executive. Tung himself has declared that he will serve out his term. As for the pace of democratization, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao has cautioned Hong Kong to have "gradual development." Old habits die hard.

Support from the United States at this juncture is crucial in safeguarding Hong Kong's freedom. A congressional resolution expressing support for democracy in Hong Kong, passed overwhelmingly by the House of Representatives in late June, certainly caught the attention of Beijing and Hong Kong. The White House and State Department also issued statements, but their tone, unfortunately, was quite lukewarm.

Allowing Beijing to suppress the only seeds of democracy that now exist on Chinese soil would be tragic for Hong Kong, but

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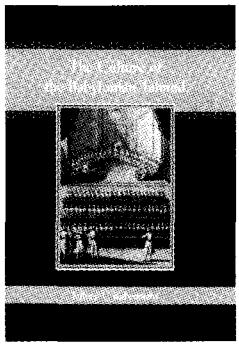
The Culture of the Babylonian Talmud



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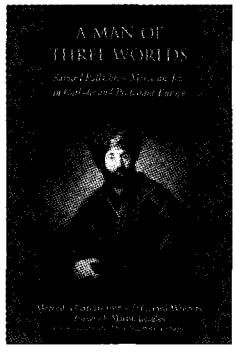

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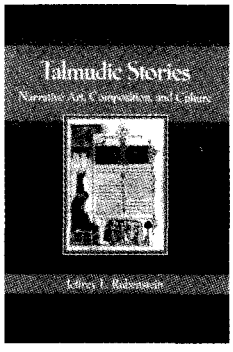

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it would also taint America's record of defending liberty.

KIN-MING LIU
Apple Daily
Hong Kong

TO THE EDITOR:

Many commentators maintain that Hong Kong's chief executive Tung Chee-hwa and leaders in Beijing were willing to withdraw the contentious Article 23 draft legislation because they wished to salvage the pro-China parties that would have to face the electorate in district elections in November 2003 and legislative elections in September 2004. While this must have been one consideration, the fact is that the protesters and opposition parties got what they asked for and the pro-government parties still have a lot of explaining to do.

One hopes the Tung administration has learned the bitter lesson that Hong Kong's people can no longer be pushed around. The old assumption that the public in Hong Kong is apolitical and cares most about material wealth needs to be revisited. No one should miss the real significance of the July 1 protests: the transformation of Hong Kong's residents from colonial subjects to citizens. They will likely behave quite differently in the future.

CHRISTINE LOH
Civic Exchange
Hong Kong

ARTHUR WALDRON writes:

In my article I argued that the mass demonstrations in Hong Kong on July 1 put Beijing in a much more difficult position than most have recognized, with implications that go far beyond the future of the former British dependent territory and even China, to the very future of freedom itself. This is a new situation. Normally, Beijing has been able to avoid clear and difficult decisions. As I wrote:

> The past 30 years have shown what masters of prevarication and illusion are China's Communist leaders. Their greatest triumph has lain in their ability to convince the world, and many of their own people, that over since the 1970's they have been in the process of doing, or about to begin to do, things which, if they actually did them, would spell their own demise.

Following this, I said that, when it came to democracy in Hong Kong, no such "fudging"—i.e., no manipulation of expectations and credulity—would any longer be possible.

Ellen Bork, as clear-eyed an observer of the Hong Kong situation as I know, takes me to task for this latter statement, pointing out, correctly, that "fudging" comes close to being the foundation of U.S.-China policy. Thus, we pretend that a dictatorship is a normal country, and that an economy having a closed capital account, government allocation of credit, and a vast state-owned sector is somehow "capitalist" or "free-market." We pretend that Hong Kong is not part of China, and that Taiwan is.

Nevertheless, I still maintain that on the question of democracy in Hong Kong, the standard make-believe is not going to suffice. The world will know the answer in five years' time, no matter what Beijing or Hong Kong or Washington says. Free elections will either have been held or not, and there will be major consequences either way.

Ellen Bork adds that "there is no evidence that Beijing is contemplating further democratization in Hong Kong, let alone in the mainland." In fact, however, such evidence does exist, in the form of statements by President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao that speak of democracy in a favorable way, quite different from the way in which former President Jiang Zemin spoke.

Since I rarely accept official Chinese statements or statistics at face value, why do I accord significance to these particular statements? My answer is that some in Beijing—some, not all—are beginning to understand that democracy, if not desirable in itself, at least may provide the easiest solution to the current Hong Kong situation; it is the path of least resistance. We have already seen economic experimentation and change in China—not complete or consistent or even necessarily entirely beneficial, but real. I expect the current leadership to begin to fiddle with political change in a similar half-baked fashion.

The problems that will arise when that fiddling begins are made clear by Kin-ming Liu, one of Hong Kong's ablest and most respected journalists. Developments in his city have so far been extremely unfavorable to Beijing because, as Mr. Liu emphasizes, "for the first time in its 54-year history of brutalizing China, the Chinese Communist party backed down in the face of a popular movement." This is bad (from the party's point of view), but no obvious or easy way to reverse it has presented itself. So, for now, Beijing has evidently decided to play by the rules that it established in the Basic Law, using every ounce of influence it possesses to secure favorable outcomes in the upcoming district-council and legislative-council elections.

But the rulers in Beijing have little knowledge, less skill, and no experience at all in democratic politics. Their emerging strategy makes these facts clear. Completely misunderstanding the basic situation, they have persuaded themselves that the malaise in Hong Kong is not political but at root economic—even though the economic downturn of several years' duration elicited no mass protests and may even have helped pro-Beijing politicians, while it was the political attempt to ram through an odious "security bill" that brought the masses into the streets. Even more foolishly, from an electoral point of view, Beijing has decided to support the reviled Hong Kong chief executive, Tung Chee-hwa (whose approval rating hovers around 20 percent), despite the clear desire of Hong Kong voters that he be thrown out.

Whatever mixture of carrots and sticks Beijing may choose as it attempts to determine the election's outcome, the fact remains, as we are reminded by Christine Loh, a fearless advocate of democracy, that "Hong Kong people can no longer be pushed around." They, like their cousins in China proper, are sick of being subjects and want to be citizens.

And what of the United

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Why Do So Many Believe The Myth That People Are Born Homosexual?

In our experience treating hundreds of homosexually oriented men, we have seen the unmistakable influence of developmental experiences in the formation of homosexual thoughts and impulses.

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Still, children are being told that homosexuality is genetic and that their homosexual thoughts and desires are "who they are." They were, it is said, "born that way." (If so, then why do such a great percentage of boys who have been molested grow up to struggle with homosexuality?)

Read what gay activist and researcher Dr. Simon Le Vay says. He is the author of the famous hypothalamus, or "gay brain" study that many have cited to argue that homosexuality is genetic:

"It's important to stress what I didn't find. I did not prove that homosexuality is genetic, or find a genetic cause for being gay. I didn't show that gay men are born that way, the most common mistake people make in interpreting my work. Nor did I locate a gay center in the brain." (David Nimmons, March, 1994, *Discover*, "Sex and the Brain," Vol. 15, No. 3, p. 64-71)

And, in a related area, Camille Paglia, lesbian writer: "Homosexuality is not 'normal.' The ten percent figure, servilely repeated by the media, was pure propaganda, and it made me, as a scholar, despise gay activists for their unscrupulous disregard for the truth." (*Vamps and Tramps*, Vintage Press, NY, 1994)

It is only decent to be honest and clear when presenting an understanding of homosexuality, as this understanding can so affect an individual's personal psychological deveopment, mental health, and life choices.

Homosexuality is neither inborn, nor benign, nor unchangeable. If you want information about the process of growing out of homosexuality, or its prevention, please contact us. Further, we ask that you not take at face value what has been promulgated as regards this issue, but visit our websites and look into the matter yourselves.

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States? Both Ellen Bork and Kin-ming Liu call upon this country to support democratization, and we have indeed heard such sentiments already from the media and Congress. But the administration has been a good deal less enthusiastic. The Basic Law does not actually promise full democracy by a date certain, and the administration, rather than calling clearly for free elections, has instead punctiliously followed Beijing's own weasel wording—supporting, as Ellen Bork tellingly points out, democracy "as envisioned by the Basic Law." Sadly, this behavior is characteristic of American administrations both Republican and Democratic, not one of which, since the days of Ronald Reagan, has unreservedly supported democracy in Asia, choosing instead to favor "stability."

Nevertheless, the clock is ticking and our government ought to be considering our position more carefully. One reason, often overlooked, is Taiwan. Wash ington's entire policy toward that island has been premised on the assumption that "One Country, Two Systems" was going to work in Hong Kong, and that that shining example of easy coexistence between dictatorship and freedom would eventually persuade the 22 million Taiwanese to accept a similar settlement. Washington has never so much as considered a "plan B." But if China makes a mess of Hong Kong—as well it may—"One Country, Two Systems" will be truly dead, and the whole contentious issue of Taiwan's future will once again be open for discussion.

Finally, we owe it to ourselves to avoid a repetition of the self-inflicted humiliation we underwent in the late 1980's when democratization began in the Soviet empire and, instead of supporting it, we called for "stability." Then we had the rather lame excuse that it had all happened too suddenly for us really to understand and respond appropriately. That excuse is not possible with respect to Hong Kong and China. Sometimes—as it did this past July in Hong Kong—history gives us a clear signal of what may be coming. Our task now is to ponder the full meaning of that message and its many implications for our current policies, which, sadly and I think mistakenly, assume and implicitly support the status quo.

My thanks to these three distinguished correspondents for taking the time to write.

New History?

TO THE EDITOR:

Efraim Karsh's mendacity and *hutzpah* are truly mind-boggling ["Revisiting Israel's 'Original Sin,'" September]. Like most of his kind, he accuses others—in this case, me—of committing the serial distortion in which he himself blatantly indulges.

Two examples should suffice to illustrate Mr. Karsh's method. Over the years, and in defiance of overwhelming evidence, he has denied that the Zionist leadership in the 1930's and 1940's supported the idea of transferring Arabs out of the area of Palestine destined for Jewish statehood as a means of solving the Zionists' "Arab problem." He has asserted that I systematically falsified or tampered with the evidence in order to prove otherwise. Now he argues that I have withdrawn the point—or, as he puts it: "Already in the late 1990's [Benny Morris] was forced to concede that 'his treatment of [Zionist] transfer thinking before 1948 was, indeed, superficial.'"

I made no such concession. What I wrote in the late 1990's was that the massive, additional evidence I had uncovered since the publication in 1988 of my *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949* only served to reinforce my view that Zionist leaders during the 1930's and 1940's firmly, almost consensually, supported the idea of transfer. (See my November 28, 1997 letter in the [London] *Times Literary Supplement*, prompted by Mr. Karsh's hysterical letter denouncing historian Omer Bartov's very negative review of Mr. Karsh's *Fabricating Israeli History*.) I did not retract. Rather, I "confessed" that my 1988 treatment of Zionist thinking on transfer had, indeed, been "superficial" and insufficient—in the sense that I had not realized how deeply and broadly the pro-transfer current ran and had not attributed to it sufficient weight in what transpired in 1948.

As to the exactness of my quotations from original sources, I recommend that interested readers, when in Jerusalem, consult the actual documents in the Central Zionist Archive. Do not rely on what Mr. Karsh says is in them, and do not rely on what Mr. Karsh says I say is in them.

In his article, Mr. Karsh also hints at another canard that he has been purveying for years among the unwitting. He has regularly charged that, in *The Birth*, I failed to make use of Israeli military archival material ("[Morris] didn't bother to go to the archives of the Hagana or the IDF")—while knowing full well that all the relevant materials in the IDF and Hagana archives were closed to researchers when I wrote my book in the mid-1980's. The two archives began opening the relevant files and giving researchers access to them only in the 1990's.

In *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (soon to be published by Cambridge University Press, at almost twice the length of the original book), I devote a full chapter to pre-1948 transfer thinking. And most of the new description and analysis of what transpired in the course of 1948 is now firmly grounded in the newly released IDF and Hagana documentation. The new (or revised) *Birth* might put the minds of some doubters to rest at least on these counts (though I am not hopeful about Mr. Karsh himself, given his manically obsessive interest in Benny Morris and the New Historians).

Curiously, Mr. Karsh shares with Ilan Pappe—the radical Israeli New Historian whom he loathes—an incapacity to separate current political beliefs from views about the past. Both abhor complexity and cleave to single-cause explanations. Both see historiography, their own and others, in terms of how it serves or obstructs their political agendas. For Mr. Karsh—

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an ardent Zionist who lives in London—the Arabs are all black, the Jews all white; for Pappe—an anti-Zionist who lives in Haifa—it is the opposite. Both, as a result, are poor historians—and, indeed, fail to understand the present, in which we are witness to a terroristic Palestinian assault on Israel that is motivated *both* by a basic rejectionism vis-à-vis Jewish statehood and by the slings and arrows of an oppressive military occupation, expansionist settlements, terrible economic conditions, and religious-political incitement.

BENNY MORRIS
Jerusalem, Israel

TO THE EDITOR:

Efraim Karsh's critique of Benny Morris is clouded by his own political agenda. *Pace* Mr. Karsh, the desire to "mitigate the original sin of Israel's existence" does not "help explain," even "in part," the "embrace of the Oslo process" by "so many educated Israelis." A more accurate description of Israeli hopes for Oslo has been offered by the Israeli Arab intellectual Zuhair Andreus. As he wrote in *Haaretz*, the idea of a two-state solution without repatriation of 1948 refugees "gave Israelis, on a silver platter, a convenient solution to the historical annoyance of the Palestinian refugees."

The Oslo concept was transparent: Palestinians would recoup their losses of 1967 while writing off their losses from 1948. Israelis would escape the demographic threat entailed by repatriation, at the price of lands on the West Bank and Gaza that polls show most Israelis have always been willing to live without.

Failure to disengage from the territories will bring about the demographic eradication of the Zionist idea. The Palestinian rejection of Oslo is thus a Jewish tragedy far beyond the painful loss of life; it is a rejection of Israel's most viable strategy for survival.

SAM SHUBE
Jerusalem, Israel

TO THE EDITOR:

As Efraim Karsh points out with some tact, Jews are often their own worst enemies. The writings of Benny Morris, Ilan Pappe, and Tom Segev contain the seeds of a virulent strain of self-destruction. Is it merely a coincidence that the al-Aqsa *intifada* began soon after the appearance of this Jewish genre of hatred for Zionism?

Whether or not the outlying Jewish communities of the West Bank and Gaza pose a problem, Israel demands at least a modicum of loyalty to its welfare. If Benny Morris has made at least a partial about-face with respect to his "discovery" of Israel's "original sin," I await similar recantations from Pappe and Segev. In the meantime, kudos to Mr. Karsh and to COMMENTARY for the courage to take on the post-Zionists.

MORTON J. SUMMER
Council for Jewish Education
Monsey, New York

EFRAIM KARSH writes:

Benny Morris is anxious to reassure COMMENTARY readers that he has not retracted his misrepresentation of Zionism as a predatory movement bent on dispossessing the Palestinian Arabs from their land. Let me set his mind at ease. I made no such claim in my article. Rather, I argued that his failure to disown the "transfer" canard, at a time when he has finally acknowledged Zionism's long-standing readiness to coexist with the Arabs in a partitioned Palestine, raises a big question mark about the sincerity of his self-proclaimed "reassessment" of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Mr. Morris has yet to decide which of the two contradictory historical narratives he has been simultaneously propagating over the past two years is the correct one. Either Zionism resigned itself early on to the existence of a substantial Arab minority in the prospective Jewish state—which was indeed the case—or it believed that, in Mr. Morris's words, "there could be no viable Jewish state in all or part of Palestine unless there was a mass displacement of Arab inhabitants." There is simply no middle way.

Actually, Mr. Morris seems to have made his choice. In his revised edition of *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, he now tells us, he devotes a full chapter to "pre-1948 Zionist transfer thinking." This we are supposed to take as a refreshing advance over the book's first edition, where the "treatment of [Zionist] transfer thinking before 1948 was, indeed, superficial," focusing mostly on three meetings of the Jewish Agency executive between June 7 and 12, 1938.

He is right about the superficiality: five days in the life of a national movement could hardly provide proof of longstanding trends or ideologies. Moreover, these particular meetings were called in response to a specific agenda forced upon the Zionist movement by the British government—namely, the implementation of the 1937 Peel partition plan, including its proposal of an exchange of land and population between the prospective Jewish and Arab states similar to that effected between Turkey and Greece in the wake of World War I. Actually, the Peel Commission had recommended neither the unilateral "transfer" of Arabs nor their expulsion from Palestine: the relocated populations, *both* Arab and Jewish, were to remain within the boundaries of Mandate Palestine. Nevertheless, after much deliberation, the Zionist leadership rejected the idea, informing the British government that "Jewish opinion was opposed to the exercise of any degree of compulsion."

Yet superficiality was the least of Mr. Morris's professional flaws. Far worse was, and remains, his propensity to distort archival source-material in an attempt to rewrite history in an image of his own devising. In this respect, his present decision to redouble his efforts to prove the "transfer" canard, rather than to concentrate on illuminating the real obstacle to regional peace during the 20th century—the unrelenting Arab rejection of the idea of Jewish statehood—bodes very ill indeed.

Now Mr. Morris charges me, "like most of [my] kind" (what precisely does this mean?), with engaging in "serial distortion," and he urges interested readers to check for themselves the veracity of my quotations. A good place to start would be with a close comparison of his own two renditions of the self-same passage by David Ben-Gurion. Here

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they are, taken respectively from the Hebrew and English versions of Mr. Morris's *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*:

> "אין אנו רוצים, אין אנו צריכים לגרש ערבים ולקחת את מקומם. כל שאיפתנו בנויה על הנחה ...שיש די מקום לנו ולערבים בארץ."

> "We must expel Arabs and take their places . . . and if we have to use force—not to dispossess the Arabs of the Negev and Transjordan, but to guarantee our own right to settle in those places—then we have force at our disposal," [Ben-Gurion] wrote to his son, Amos, contemplating the implementation of the transfer recommendation of the Peel commission report.

As readers of Hebrew can see for themselves, Ben-Gurion argued that "We do not wish, we do not need, to expel Arabs and take their place. All our aspiration is built on the assumption . . . that there is enough room for ourselves and the Arabs in Palestine." The English-language version of Mr. Morris's book contrives to state precisely the opposite.

In his letter, Mr. Morris concedes that he wrote *The Birth* without consulting the archives of the key Israeli institutions whose actions in 1947-49 formed the burden of his indictment. He claims, however, that at the time of his writing—the mid-1980's—these archives were closed to researchers. If this were so, Mr. Morris was being dishonest in presenting his research as "new history"—a term he himself coined on grounds of alleged access to newly available documentary evidence. Instead, he should have informed his readers that his conclusions were tentative, pending the opening of the archives.

But *were* the archives actually closed to researchers in the mid-1980's? The first three volumes of Uri Milstein's Hebrew-language history of Israel's war of independence, published in Tel Aviv in 1989—a year after *The Birth*—draw on countless documents from the Hagana and the IDF archives. In his introduction, Milstein gratefully acknowledges the generous assistance of these two archives, among others, in the writing of his study, which he says was in the making since 1976.

Nor is that the end of it. As early as 1976, the historian Elhanan Oren published a book on the Israeli offensive of mid-July 1948, codenamed Operation Danny, that captured the Arab towns of Lydda and Ramleh. The book makes extensive use of Hagana and IDF archives, including telegrams from the operations department, daily reports of the Qiryati brigade, Palmach files, and so on. Mr. Morris's *The Birth* appeared *twelve years later*, without benefit of these same two archives. But this did not prevent him from launching a stinging attack on Oren, deriding him and other Israeli researchers as "old historians" who had supposedly composed their works without access to recently declassified documentation on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Sam Shube gives too much credit to the Israeli architects of Oslo. The problem with Oslo was not its vision of a two-state solution—i.e., Israel living side by side in peace with a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. This idea had been accepted by mainstream Zionism as early as 1937 and 1947, and to this day remains the only conceivable basis of a peace settlement should the Palestinians one day truly reconcile themselves to Israel's existence.

Rather, the tragedy of Oslo lay first in the insistence of its advocates on making "peace" with an organization committed to Israel's destruction and then in their no less insistent clinging to their designated "partner" in the face of irrefutable evidence that, for this "partner"—i.e., Yasir Arafat and the PLO—Oslo was a means not to a two-state solution but to the substitution of a Palestinian state for Israel. The recent "Geneva agreement" between PLO officials and leftist Israeli politicians headed by Yossi Beilin affords the latest illustration of this infinite capacity for self-delusion.

The Oslo process may be the only instance in diplomatic history where one signatory to a peace accord has declared a priori that it is amenable to its co-signatory's violation of the accord. Of course, there have been numerous agreements in which one or both parties acted in bad faith. In September 1938, Adolf Hitler signed the Munich agreement with the deliberate intent of using it as a "Trojan horse" for the destruction of Czechoslovakia. Given their marked military inferiority, and the fact of their abandonment by the international community, there was little the Czechs could do about this. At Oslo, by contrast, it was the far stronger party that allowed the far weaker one to emulate Hitler's strategy. Why? In the words of Shimon Peres in 1996, long after Arafat had fully demonstrated his bad faith, "We close our eyes. We don't criticize, because for peace, we must produce a partner."

Hitler's Opera

TO THE EDITOR:

I greatly appreciated Terry Teachout's "The Murder Artist" [September]. He is entirely right about Hitler; a reading of the dictator's "table talk" amply bears out Mr. Teachout's idea that the Nazi revolution was conceived by him as a great piece of theater, and one based largely on the work of Richard Wagner.

Although Mr. Teachout suggests that Hitler's obsession with Wagner began at the age of twelve, with a viewing of *Lohengrin*, I am surprised he does not cite Wagner's *Rienzi*, which Hitler himself referred to as the prototype for his political career. Indeed, anyone reading the libretto or listening to the score of that opera will quickly become familiar with the outlines of a drama that, in time, Hitler would succeed in turning into dreadful reality.

ROBB THURSTON
Seattle, Washington

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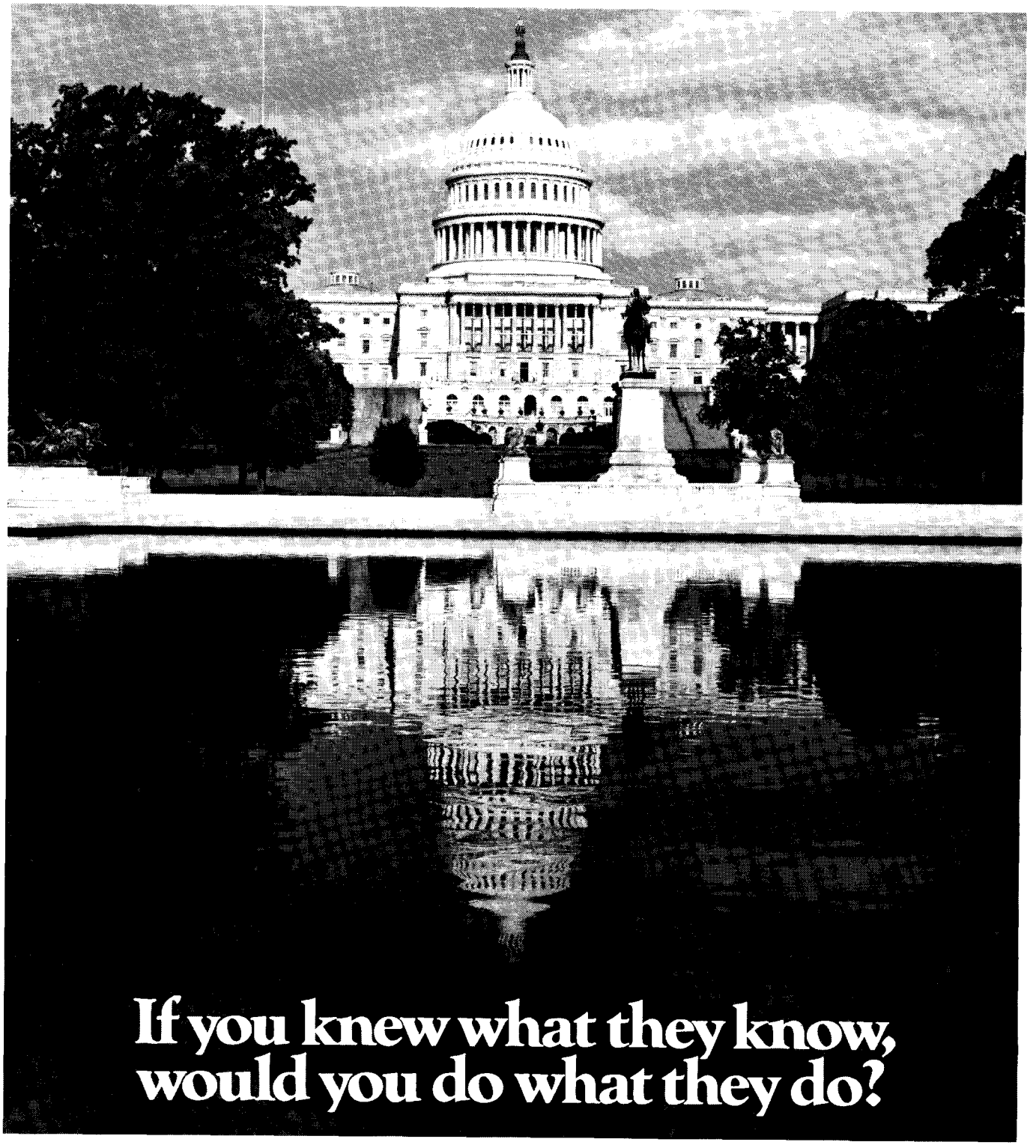

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Commentary
December 2003

Israel's Arabs v. Israel

Efraim Karsh

October 1, 2000, a day when most Israelis were observing the Jewish new year, was also the second day of the "al-Aqsa *intifada*," a campaign of anti-Israel violence planned and coordinated by Yasir Arafat's Palestinian Authority after the collapse of the Camp David talks in July. It was also a day on which, to add shock to shock, Arab citizens of Israel unleashed their own wave of violence against their Jewish compatriots.

For the next ten days, Israeli Arabs blocked several main roads, cutting off Jewish localities and forcing some of them to defend against armed assaults by neighbors with whom they had maintained cordial relations for decades. Scores of Jewish families spending the holiday season in the Galilee found themselves attacked by frenzied Arab mobs wielding Molotov cocktails, ball bearings in slingshots, stones, even firearms. Stores, post offices, and other public places were ransacked as rioters clashed with police. Forests were set ablaze. In Nazareth, thousands of Arabs marched in the streets chanting, "With our souls and our blood we will redeem Palestine." Jaffa and Haifa, the showcases of Arab-Jewish coexistence, were rocked by violence and vandalism.

That was three years ago. This past September, an Israeli state commission of inquiry headed by deputy chief justice Theodore Orr finally submitted its official report on the riots. Acknowledging the strong chauvinistic impulse behind them, the commission noted grimly that "Jews were attacked on the roads merely for being Jewish," and it rebuked Israeli Arab leaders not only for failing to direct their grievances into democratic channels but also for having worked over the years to delegitimize the state and its institutions in the eyes of their constituents:

> The messages transmitted prior to and during the October disturbances blurred and sometimes erased the distinction between [on the one hand] Israel's Arab citizens and their legitimate struggle for civil rights and [on the other hand] the armed struggle against Israel by organizations and individuals in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. More than once, the two struggles were presented by leaders of the Arab community as a single struggle against one adversary, if not an enemy.

Yet even while denouncing such actions as "incompatible with the concept of citizenship," the Orr commission refrained from proposing disciplinary measures against Israeli Arab leaders who had incited their fellow Arabs to violence. Instead, it attributed the volcanic eruption to something else entirely—namely, a longstanding callousness on the part of *the Israeli establishment itself* toward the state's Arab minority:

Efraim Karsh, *head of Mediterranean studies at King's College, University of London, is currently a visiting scholar at Harvard. His new book,* Arafat's War, *was recently published by Grove Atlantic.*

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> The state and successive generations of its government have failed to address in a comprehensive and deep fashion the difficult problems created by the existence of a large Arab minority inside the Jewish state. Government handling of the Arab sector has been primarily neglectful and discriminatory. The establishment did not show sufficient sensitivity to the needs of the Arab sector, and did not do enough to give this sector its equal share of state resources. The state did not do enough or try hard enough to create equality for its Arab citizens or to uproot discriminatory or unjust practices.

BEHIND THIS mournful and self-incriminatory diagnosis lie the ruins of an age-old Zionist hope: that the material progress resulting from Jewish settlement of Palestine would ease the path for the local Arab populace to become permanently reconciled, if not positively well disposed, to the project of Jewish national self-determination. Thus, in December 1947, shortly after Palestinian Arabs had already initiated a violent effort to subvert the UN resolution partitioning the territory of Palestine into two states, David Ben-Gurion, soon to become Israel's first prime minister, argued that despite appearances of implacable enmity, "If the Arab citizen will feel at home in our state . . . if the state will help him in a truthful and dedicated way to reach the economic, social, and cultural level of the Jewish community, then Arab distrust will accordingly subside and a bridge will be built to a Semitic, Jewish-Arab alliance."

In Ben-Gurion's view, as in that of other Zionist leaders, Arab resentment and distrust were linked above all to socio-economic deprivation; with growing affluence, such feelings would be supplanted by their opposites. Over a half-century later, the Orr commission comes to the same conclusion, and blames Israel for the ongoing failure to achieve Ben-Gurion's vision: the fact that Arab enmity has not given way, but on the contrary has intensified, confirms the melancholy fact that the "Arab sector" is a victim of official discrimination and has yet to receive "its equal share of state resources."

Unfortunately, this theory is false in general, and especially false in this particular case. In the modern world, it is not the poor and the oppressed who have led the great revolutions and/or carried out the worst deeds of violence; rather, it is militant vanguards from among the better educated and more moneyed circles of society. As for Israeli Arabs, the more prosperous, affluent, and better educated they have become, the greater has grown their disaffection from the state, to the point where many openly challenge the fundamental principles underpinning its very existence. Finally, the commission's portrait of Israeli Arabs as a deprived and discriminated-against community bears no relation to reality. But to understand this requires a look back at the history of Israel's Arab minority over the past 55 years.

THE END of the 1948 war found the Palestinian-Arab community profoundly shattered. Of the 750,000 Arab residents of the territory that came to be Israel, only 160,000 had stayed put through the hostilities; at the state's founding, they formed 13.6 percent of the total population. But these numbers did not stay low for long. Thanks to a remarkable fertility rate of 4.2 percent a year, and despite successive waves of Jewish immigration into Israel, the proportion of Arabs grew steadily over the decades. By the end of 2002, Israel's Arab minority had leapt eightfold in number to over 1.2 million, or 19 percent of the state's total population. Today, about half of this community resides in the Galilee, with the rest spread more or less evenly among the Haifa district, the "little triangle" in central Israel (along the "green line"), the Negev, and, since June 1967, east Jerusalem.

The mass exodus of 1948-49 took Israel's leadership by surprise. As I have already suggested, the Zionist movement had always assumed that there would be a substantial Arab minority in the future Jewish state, and the general conviction was that they would participate on an equal footing "throughout all sectors of the country's public life." The words are those of Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the founding father of the branch of Zionism that was the forebear of today's Likud party.

In 1934, Jabotinsky had presided over the drafting of a constitution for Jewish Palestine. According to its provisions, Arabs and Jews were to share both the prerogatives and the duties of statehood, notably including military and civil service; Hebrew and Arabic were to enjoy the same legal standing; and "in every cabinet where the prime minister is a Jew, the vice-premiership shall be offered to an Arab and vice versa." Echoing this vision, David Ben-Gurion told the leadership of his own (Mapai) party in 1947 that the non-Jews in the Jewish state "will be equal citizens; equal in everything without any exception; that is, the state will be their state as well."

Committees laying the groundwork for the nascent state discussed in detail the establishment of an Arabic-language press, the improvement of

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health, the incorporation of Arab officials into the government, the integration of Arabs within the police and the ministry of education, and Arab-Jewish cultural and intellectual interaction. Even military plans for rebuffing an anticipated pan-Arab invasion in the late 1940's were predicated, in the explicit instructions of the commander-in-chief of the Hagana, on the "acknowledgement of the full rights, needs, and freedom of the Arabs in the Hebrew state without any discrimination, and a desire for coexistence on the basis of mutual freedom and dignity."

The same principle was enshrined in Israel's Declaration of Independence, issued on May 14, 1948. The new state undertook to "uphold absolute social and political equality of rights for all its citizens, without distinction of religion, race, or sex." In particular, Arab citizens were urged "to take part in the building of the state on the basis of full and equal citizenship and on the basis of appropriate representation in all its institutions, provisional and permanent." While the Declaration lacked constitutional status, its principles were taken as guidelines for governmental behavior; over the years, they would gain legal authority through supreme-court decisions and acts of the Knesset (parliament).

Israeli Arabs have indeed enjoyed full equality before the law, and are endowed with the full spectrum of democratic rights—including the right to vote for and serve in all state institutions. (From the first, Arabs have been members of the Knesset.) This is in itself a remarkable fact. From the designation of Arabic as an official language, to the recognition of non-Jewish religious holidays as legal resting days for their respective communities, to the granting of educational, cultural, judicial, and religious autonomy, Arabs in Israel may well enjoy more formal prerogatives than ethnic minorities anywhere in the democratic world.

This hardly means that the state's treatment of its Arab minority has been spotless. Civic equality, like any other principle, does not exist in a vacuum, or in isolation from other fundamental political values like stability and public security. In every modern nation-state, majority-minority relations have been a problem, and all the more so when an ethnic minority forms part of a larger nation or group that is hostile to the state in which it resides. Early on, the attempt of Arab nations to destroy Israel at birth, the repeated talk of a "second round," and the fact that many Israeli Arab enclaves were located in sensitive border areas fueled fears within the Jewish state of a possible transformation of its Arab communities into hotbeds of subversive activity.

For security reasons, then, the main Arab population centers were placed under military administration, a policy that ended only in December 1966. Similar considerations precluded the conscription of most Arabs into military service. The exemption was also designed to ease the Arabs' "dual loyalty" dilemma, sparing them the need to confront their cousins on the battlefield; it corresponded, as well, with the wishes of the Arab population itself.

The policy of exempting Israeli Arabs from military service had real-life effects. In the short term, it conferred a certain practical benefit, giving young Arabs a three-year head start over most of their Jewish counterparts in entering the labor force or acquiring a higher education. Over the longer term, however, it worked to constrain Arab economic and social mobility, for the simple reason that, until the 1990's, military service was the main entry point into the corridors of adult Israeli life. But these constraints were not the result of "insufficient sensitivity," let alone of discrimination on the basis of religion or nationality; the same disadvantages beset and continue to beset Jewish individuals and communities that have likewise been exempted from military service, notably the ultra-Orthodox.

The issue of discrimination aside, it cannot be sufficiently stressed that, contrary to the dismal pronouncements of the Orr commission, the Arabs living in the Jewish state have made astounding social and economic progress. Far from lagging behind, their rate of development has often *surpassed* that of the Jewish sector, with the result that the gap between the two communities has steadily narrowed.

Health statistics are but one indicator. Perhaps most significantly, mortality rates among Israeli Arabs have fallen by nearly two-thirds over the last decades, while life expectancy has risen from age seventy (in 1970) to seventy-six today. Not only does the latter figure compare favorably with the Middle East's average of sixty-eight, but the average Israeli Arab male can expect to live substantially longer than his white European counterpart. Thanks to Israel's medical and health-education programs, infant-mortality rates have similarly been slashed: from 56 per 1,000 live births in 1950 to 7.6 today. (In the U.S., the infant-mortality rate for whites is 8.5, for African-Americans a dismaying 21.3.)*

* These and many more comparative figures can be found in two articles by Amnon Rubinstein in *Haaretz*, September 10, 2002 and April 7, 2003.

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No less remarkable have been the advances in education. Since Israel's founding, while the Arab population has grown eightfold, the number of Arab schoolchildren has multiplied by a factor of 35. If, in 1960, the average Israeli Arab spent one year in school, today the figure is over eleven years; over the same period, adult illiteracy rates have dropped from 52 to 6.2 percent (3.5 percent among women younger than forty-five). This not only places Israeli Arabs miles ahead of their brothers in the Arab world—in Morocco illiteracy is at 69 percent, in Egypt at 61 percent, in Syria at 44 percent—but reflects a pace of improvement nearly double that of the Jewish sector.

Still more dramatic has been the story in higher education, where the numbers of Arab graduates multiplied fifteen times between 1961 and 2001. Thirty years ago, a mere 4 percent of Arab teachers held academic degrees; by 2000, the figure had vaulted to 47 percent.

Standard of living? In the late 1940's, following the flight of its more affluent classes and the breakdown of economic relations with neighboring Arab states, the Arab minority in Israel was left largely impoverished. As they became increasingly incorporated into local economic life, Arabs experienced a steep rise in earnings and a visible improvement in their material circumstances. By 2002, 86 percent of Arab households—more Arab households than Jewish ones—occupied dwellings of three or more rooms. Contrary to the standard image of cramped neighborhoods and acute land shortages, population density in Arab localities is substantially *lower* on average than in equivalent Jewish locales.

As for income statistics, it is undeniable that, on average, Israeli Arabs still earn less than Jews. But to what is this attributable? For one thing, the average Muslim in Israel is ten years younger than his Jewish counterpart; all over the world, younger people earn less. Then, too, fewer Arab women enter the labor market than do Jewish women. The salience of these and other factors—family size, level of schooling, cultural tradition, and so forth—may be judged by looking at segments of Israeli Jewish society like the ultra-Orthodox or residents of development towns (localities established during the 50's and 60's to absorb the fresh waves of Jewish immigration, especially from Arab countries), whose income levels more closely resemble those in the Arab sector. In 1997, for instance, when the average monthly salary in Arab Nazareth was 4,450 shekels, the equivalent figure for mostly Jewish Upper Nazareth was 4,780 shekels. During the late 1990's, the unemployment rate in Israel's Arab sector was consistently lower than in Jewish development towns.

Has the government given short shrift to the economic needs of the Arab sector, as the Orr commission asserts? Quite the reverse. Allocations to Arab municipalities have grown steadily over the past 40 years, and are now on a par with, if not higher than, subsidies to the Jewish sector. By the mid-1990's, Arab municipalities were receiving about a quarter of all such allocations, well above the "share" of Arabs in Israel's overall population. In numerous cases, contributions to Arab municipal budgets substantially exceed contributions to equivalently situated Jewish locales: in 1996, for instance, relative disbursements to the Arab town of Tamra were three times higher than to the Jewish town of Yahud; nearly three times higher to (Arab) Abu Snan than to (Jewish) Even Yehuda; twice as high to (Arab) Iksal as to (Jewish) Azur.

AND SO it goes. According to the Orr commission, the cause of the October 2000 riots is to be sought in the palpable discontent and resentment of Israel's Arab community, and that discontent and resentment can in turn be traced to the discriminatory state policies that have led to large-scale social and economic deprivation. About this, the commission is quite spectacularly wrong.

Besides, if the culprits are poverty and second-class status, why were there never any disturbances remotely like the October 2000 riots among similarly situated segments of *Jewish* society in Israel, or, for that matter, among Israeli Arabs in the much worse-off 1950's and 1960's? Why, indeed, did dissidence increase dramatically with *improvements* in the standard of living, and why did it escalate into an open uprising after a decade that saw government allocations to Arab municipalities grow by 550 percent, and the number of Arab civil servants nearly treble?

In fact, what led to growing defiance of the state, its policies, and its values was not deprivation. Rather, it was the steady radicalization of the Israeli Arab community over the past decades. This process was facilitated by rising affluence and education; it also followed a political logic of its own.

The process began with the Six-Day war of June 1967. In the relatively relaxed aftermath of that conflict, Israeli Arabs came into renewed direct contact with their cousins in the West Bank and Gaza as well as with the wider Arab world. Family and social contacts broken in 1948 were restored, and a diverse network of social, economic, cultural, and political relations was formed. For the first

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time since 1948, Israeli Muslims were allowed by Arab states to participate in the sacred pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, thus breaking an unofficial ostracism and restoring a sense of self-esteem and pan-Arab belonging—and encouraging a correlative degree of estrangement from Israel.

Six years later came the Yom Kippur war, shattering Israel's image as an invincible military power and tarnishing its international reputation. One result was quickly felt on the local political scene. During the 1950's and 60's, most Arab voters had given their support to Israel's ruling Labor party and/or a string of associated Arab lists. This had already begun to change by 1969, when Raqah, a predominantly Arab Communist party and a champion of radical anti-Israelism, made its successful electoral debut. By 1973, in elections held three months after the Yom Kippur war, Raqah (or Hadash, as it was later renamed) had become the dominant party in the Arab sector, winning 37 percent of the vote; four years later, it totally eclipsed its rivals with 51 percent of Arab ballots cast. By the late 1990's, things had moved so far in an anti-Israel direction that many Arabs, apparently finding Raqah/Hadash too tame, were shifting their allegiance to newer and still more militant parties.*

Nor did the PLO fail to capitalize on these internal developments. Founded in 1964, it had at first ignored the Israeli Arabs, but soon embarked on a sustained effort to incorporate them into its struggle for Israel's destruction. In 1972, the Palestine National Council, the PLO's quasi-parliament, decided to consolidate "the ties of national unity between the masses of our citizens in the territories occupied in 1948"—i.e., Israel—"and those in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and outside the occupied homeland." Within a few years, having been recognized by the Arab League as the "sole legitimate representative" of the Palestinian people and then gaining observer status at the United Nations, the PLO increasingly became the main focus of identification for Israeli Arabs.

Things came to a head on March 30, 1976 in the form of mass riots—harbingers of worse to come. The occasion was the government's announced intention to appropriate some 5,000 acres of the Galilee for development. Though most of the land was owned either by the state or by private Jewish individuals, the announcement triggered a wave of violence that ended in the deaths of six Arab rioters and the wounding of dozens more. "Land Day," as the disturbances came to be known, was thenceforth commemorated annually in renewed and often violent demonstrations.

Almost immediately following the first "Land Day," a group of Arab leaders met with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to demand that Israeli Arabs be officially recognized as a national rather than a religious and cultural minority. The demand was turned down, and the government managed temporarily to defuse the situation by transferring state-owned lands to the Arab sector for agricultural and building purposes. But the "Palestinization" of Israeli Arabs continued apace. By 1980, some 55 percent defined themselves as Palestinians; by 1995, virtually all did.

By then, too, extremist politics and violence had become institutionalized. December 1987 saw the outbreak of the first widespread Palestinian uprising (*intifada*) in the West Bank and Gaza. Showing their support for their brethren in the occupied territories, Israeli Arabs committed acts of vandalism (burning forests, stoning private cars, destroying agricultural crops and equipment) and launched armed attacks on Jews within Israel proper. In the course of two years, the number of such individual attacks rose sharply from 69 (in 1987) to 187 (in 1989), and acts of sedition from 101 to 353.

The *intifada* strained Arab-Jewish relations within Israel to their limits (till then), lapsing only with the signing of the 1993 Oslo peace accords between Israel and the PLO. But if Oslo eased the violence, it also proved a major catalyst of further radicalization. Enthused by the prospects of Palestinian statehood, fearful of being left behind, Israeli Arabs steadily escalated their nationalist demands. Now put forward were such hitherto unsayable ideas as that Israel should be dissolved and transformed into a bi-national state—that is, an Arab state in which not Arabs but Jews would take their place as a minority.

OTHER FACTORS contributed to the worsening of the situation as well. One was the rising power and influence of the Islamist movement, which injected into the conflict a religious element that had largely lain dormant ever since 1948. Another was Israel's delusional embrace of Oslo, despite the PLO's brazen and continual flouting of its obligations under the 1993 agreement. A third was the growing "post-Zionist" trend among educated Israelis, which, by creating the impression of a fatigued society ready to pay any price for respite, emboldened the most radical elements on the Arab side to dream of delivering a final blow.

* For an extended discussion of the effects of these trends on Arab members of the Knesset, see Dan Schueftan, "Voice of Palestine: The New Ideology of Israeli Arabs," in *Azure*, Winter 2003.

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It was the embrace of Oslo that did the greatest damage. In recognizing the PLO as "the representative of the Palestinian people," the Rabin government effectively endorsed that organization's claim of authority over a substantial number of Israeli citizens, and gave it carte blanche to interfere in Israel's domestic affairs. Such a concession would be a sure recipe for trouble even under the most amicable of arrangements; made to an irredentist party still officially committed to the destruction of its "peace partner," it proved nothing short of catastrophic.

From the moment of his arrival in Gaza in July 1994, Arafat set out to make the most of what Israel had handed him, indoctrinating not only the residents of the territories but also Israeli Arabs with an ineradicable hatred of Israel, of Jews, and of Judaism. His intention was made clear as early as his welcoming speech, which smeared his new peace partner with extensive references to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and ended with a pledge to "liberate" Israel's Arab citizens from their alleged subjugation. "I am saying it clearly and loudly to all our brothers, from the Negev to the Galilee," Arafat proclaimed, "and let me quote Allah's words: 'We desired to be gracious to those that were abased in the land, and to make them leaders, and to make them the inheritors, and to establish them in the land.'"

Within a month of his arrival in Gaza, Arafat had secretly ordered the extension of PA activities to Israeli Arabs, allocating $10 million in initial funding and appointing Ahmed Tibi, his political adviser and an Israeli citizen, to head the subversive operation. In subsequent years, PLO and PA interference in Israel's domestic affairs would range from mediation of internal Arab disputes, to outright attempts to influence the outcome of Israeli elections, to the spread of vile propaganda calling for Israel's destruction. "Zionist—your death is in my hands," ran a videocassette produced by Force 17, Arafat's praetorian guard, and distributed in Nazareth in the mid-1990's. "The one who has forcefully robbed my land will only give it back by force. [Force] 17 in Gaza and Jaffa, 17 in Jerusalem and Haifa, 17 in Jenin and Ramleh, 17 in Lod and Acre."

The incitement struck an eager chord. As the 1990's wore on, open identification with Israel's sworn enemies and even euphemistic calls for Israel's destruction became regular themes of Israeli Arab leaders. Azmi Bishara, a member of the Knesset and head of the Arab nationalist Balad party, applauded Hizballah's struggle against Israel in Lebanon and urged Israeli Arabs to celebrate the terrorist organization's achievements and internalize its operational lessons. Likewise, Abdel Malik Dahamshe, the Islamist movement's most senior Knesset representative, justified his own repeated anti-Israel incitements on the grounds that "the 1948 war [to destroy Israel] goes on."

SUCH STATEMENTS had their predictable effect. When, in February 1994, a Jewish fanatic murdered 29 Muslims at prayer in Hebron, large-scale riots erupted in numerous Arab localities throughout Israel, with mobs battling police for four full days. The scenario repeated itself in September 1996 when Arafat, capitalizing on the opening of a new exit to an archaeological tunnel in Jerusalem, stirred a fresh wave of mass violence. In this respect, at least, the riots of October 2000 were an event foretold, although one could not have predicted their scope and duration.

The first signs occurred as early as July. As the Camp David summit was about to convene amid widespread talk of a breakthrough for peace, Abdel Malik Dahamshe threatened that any Arab concessions over Jerusalem would trigger a violent eruption of cosmic proportions. "Our souls yearn for martyrs' death for the defense of al-Aqsa and blessed Jerusalem, and millions of Muslims and Arabs will respond to the call to martyr themselves," he declared. "I am willing and praying to be the first *shahid* [martyr] to sacrifice his body in defense of Islam's holiest sites in Jerusalem." Not to be outdone was Sheik Raid Salah, leader of the northern faction of the Islamist movement. In public appearances, newspaper articles, and poems, he urged his followers to make the ultimate sacrifice for the liberation of the "stolen homeland."

The Camp David talks ended on July 25 with Arafat's blanket repudiation and walkout. On September 30, the day after an approved visit by Ariel Sharon to the Muslim-administered areas of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, the second *intifada* began with open clashes between Palestinian rioters and police. That same day, in an official statement, a committee making up the effective leadership of Israeli Arabs called the deaths of seven Palestinian rioters a "premeditated horrendous massacre" by the Barak government and proclaimed October 1 a day of national mourning, strikes, and demonstrations. "The blood of our wounded has mixed with the blood of our people in defending the blessed al-Aqsa and crossed the green line [i.e., the pre-1967 line]," ran the statement. "It does not stand to reason that we will re-

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main aloof in the face of the . . . barbaric actions in Jerusalem and the attempt to desecrate al-Haram al-Sharif and to subject it to Israeli sovereignty."

The following day the Israeli Arab sector exploded. The shock waves of the ensuing weeks are still being registered, and not even the Orr commission's elaborate fudgings can dispel the true nature of the crisis facing Israel from within.

The October 2000 riots were not an act of social protest, and they did not mark a stage in "a legitimate struggle for civil rights." They were a violent internal rising in support of an external attack. It was as if tens of thousands of Japanese Americans had responded to Pearl Harbor by engaging in wholesale violence against their fellow Americans. Of course, that particular uprising never happened—which did not prevent the American government from interning thousands of American citizens of Japanese origin for much of the war as suspected members of a "fifth column."

In Israel, the violence did happen. But the Barak government, declining to acknowledge it for what it was and what it portended, instead apologized for the thirteen rioters who died in violent clashes with security forces over the ten-day period, announced increased economic support for the Arab sector to the tune of four billion shekels, and proceeded to appoint the Orr commission to investigate not the rioters but the state's response to them. Small wonder, then, that this commission ended up lifting the lion's share of the blame from the shoulders of the aggressors, or satisfied itself with uttering the naive wish that its own demonstration of good faith would "contribute, in the final analysis, to a meeting of hearts among Arabs and Jews in Israel."

No such meeting of hearts seems in prospect. The fundamental problem of Israel's Arab minority lies not in any lack of rights or opportunities but in its unique national character. Unlike almost every ethnic or religious minority throughout the world, Israeli Arabs are an avowedly non- or anti-assimilationist minority with the mentality of a majority. Far from seeking to adapt themselves to the norms and habits of the majority, now more than ever they regard themselves as unlawfully dominated by an alien invader who must be supplanted. Their rejection of their minority status has not diminished but has intensified with the rise in their economic and political fortunes, and so has their opposition to the Jewish state *per se*. If, in the mid-1970's, one in two Israeli Arabs repudiated Israel's right to exist, by 1999 four out of five were doing so.

Such fundamental dissonance is indeed "incompatible with the concept of citizenship," to use the Orr report's tepid formulation. Unless it changes, it spells even deeper and more intractable trouble ahead. The advice of the Orr commission is useless; to the contrary, following it would amount to an open invitation to Israeli Arabs to go on undermining the country's legitimacy while continuing to enjoy the benefits of citizenship. But *is* there, at this late date, any way to encourage Israel's Arabs to normalize their minority status within the Jewish state, intensify their identification with its destiny, and thereby help convince their Palestinian cousins to reconcile themselves as well to its permanent existence?

One good place to start would be with conscription of Israeli Arabs into military service—or, in specific cases, equivalent national service. This would not require any special legislation; the 1986 Defense Service law obligates all Israeli citizens to serve in the army upon reaching the age of eighteen. But it would certainly be a revolutionary move, one that would force Muslim and Christian Arabs to decide where their deepest loyalties lie and act accordingly. (The Druze community, whose sons already serve in the armed forces, made its choice as early as 1948.)

Defending one's state against external aggression is indeed the ultimate test of citizenship. Just as French Jews fought German Jews during World War I, Italian Americans and German Americans fought Italians and Germans during World War II, and Arabs have incessantly fought other Arabs, why should Israel's Arab citizens not undertake to defend their country against its enemies? Failure to share the burden, the anxieties, and the suffering of their Jewish compatriots runs counter to the very principle of equality that Israeli Arabs have been trumpeting for so long as their watchword. Why not test it?

Of course, to raise the possibility is to expose the idea as utopian in the extreme. That is merely another measure of the extremity in which Israel finds itself.

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Listening to Arabs

Joshua Muravchik

"LET him finish," called out Ruthie. The bell had sounded, but the class, at a summer institute in Greece, sat and listened as Gevara poured out his tale of woe. His mother had died in childbirth when her urgent passage to a hospital had been impeded at one of the scores of Israeli checkpoints dotting the West Bank. Then, not one but two of his brothers had died at the hands of Israeli soldiers—apparently, as best one could make out through Gevara's inexpert English, during the "Jenin massacre" in the spring of 2002. Nor was that all. His home had been demolished to make way for Israel's new security fence. And, only a few days previously, Gevara himself had been arrested as he tried to enter Israel for the flight to attend this very institute. Held for two days, he had missed his plane and been forced to find another, leaving from Jordan. Although the Israeli authorities finally released him, they had also summarily sentenced him to six months in jail, to be served upon his return.

As he spoke, Gevara—a nickname perhaps intended in homage to Fidel Castro's sidekick Che Guevara—began to cry. So did several of his listeners, including some Israelis. Afterward, one of them, the same Ruthie who had insisted that he be heard, contacted B'Tselem, an Israeli human-rights organization specializing in complaints about the treatment of Arabs, to see if she could secure help for him.

With this episode, the atmosphere at the institute lost some of its frivolity. Eighty-three students were participating in a three-week program in politics and economics on the island of Crete. Although some were Americans, most had been drawn from the Balkans and the Mediterranean basin, including, by design, members of several nations in conflict: Greeks and Turks, Serbs and Albanians, Arabs and Israelis. I taught there every day for a week in August, giving a series of lectures about democracy. It was one of several experiences in recent months that brought me into closer contact with Arabs than I had been before and left me with new impressions—new at least to me.

UNTIL THE Gevara incident, the mood had been about what one might expect in a gathering of college-age young people of both sexes on a Greek island far from home. Anticipation had built up weeks in advance through messages exchanged on an electronic bulletin board in the cyberslang that many of the youngsters seemed to know better than English ("congrats 2 u 2; c u soon"). An introductory posting from a Lebanese captured the high spirits: "Beirut isn't that terrible. Screw politics. We party till the morning. . . .

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About the readings [which the institute had sent to students well ahead of time], let's all agree on reading them AFTER we get to Greece."

Having made acquaintances online, groups of students planned to link up in budget accommodations for a few days of sunshine before the start of classes. One such group comprised a Turkish girl and four boys—two Lebanese, a Syrian, and an American. Whether or not their parents knew of the arrangement, other parents, especially of Arab girls, had been more cautious about their children's itineraries. Once classes began, however, dorm life went on into the wee hours, and it did not center on assigned readings. Featured, rather, were such cultural exchanges as spin-the-bottle, a game the Americans obligingly taught the others to play.

But things had grown more serious after Gevara's terrible revelation, which occurred just before my arrival for the second week of classes. I heard it recounted many times, including, with great earnestness, by one of the other American teachers, a strong if soft-spoken partisan of the Arab cause who had once taught at the American University of Beirut. The tensions it fed between the Arab and Israeli students broke forth in my own classroom on the day I lectured about the state of democracy in the contemporary world.

In the course of our discussion, a shy girl from Jordan expressed her dismay at my assertion that her country was not a democracy. "But our king does so much for the people, and for the Palestinians," she protested. Hotter still were objections from numerous Arab students to my classification of Israel as a democracy. "How can you say that when they invaded us in 1967?" demanded one Syrian, revealing volumes about his education. What about Israeli "aggression," or the treatment of Israel's Arab citizens, or, especially, the occupation, asked others. My repeated explanation—that, the accuracy of their criticisms aside, a nation's political system does not necessarily determine the wisdom or justice of its policies—seemed to fall mostly on ears deafened by reluctance to hear anything positive about Israel, especially in a sphere in which the Arab states scored poorly.

A Palestinian-American boy, passionately devoted to the Palestinian cause but with a puppyish softness that bespoke his American upbringing, wanted to know how I could characterize a "religious state" like Israel as a democracy. Later, in the cafeteria, I explained that unlike the case of Christianity or Islam, Jewishness entails both a religion and a nationality. "Does anybody know this?" he asked finally, when he got the point.

Nor was Israel the only country whose standing as a democracy was challenged. An Egyptian girl pointed out that America could not be considered a real democracy because "no leftists are allowed to teach in American universities." I said that was mistaken, and after class informed her that so many American professors were leftists as to give rise to the complaint among conservatives that you could not teach if you were *not* one. Accepting the correction, she explained with a little embarrassment that she had only been repeating what she had heard from her professor—who was the daughter of former Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser.

That evening, there was a dinner at which the students, grouped by country, exhibited or performed something of their native culture. When the Palestinians' turn came, Gevara led off. After showing an artifact of some kind, he picked up a fist-sized stone he had brought and said, "These are the stones we throw at our oppressors." Next came the Palestinian-American, who opened with the remark that "nothing is more important to us than family." At this point, Ruthie called out: "Not even your stones?" Evidently she was growing impatient with her Palestinian peers, perhaps because she had already heard back from B'Tselem that it had no knowledge of Gevara's family travails, even though it attempts to keep complete records of such things. For her outburst, she was forcefully shushed by the school's Greek director, who had sat silently through Gevara's presentation.

During the final days of the institute, after I was gone, a "peace lunch" was organized for the Arabs and Israelis, but several of the former, notably the Egyptians led by the girl who studied with Nasser's daughter, refused to take part. Earlier, bidding farewell to Gevara, I had invited him to look me up whenever he might get to Washington. "I think I'll be there in October," he replied to my surprise, this being August and his six-month sentence presumably lying ahead. "I'm going to a young leaders' conference that will be either in Washington or San Francisco."

Wherever Gevara was heading, I was soon heading to Morocco to take part in a symposium on "Europe, America, and Islam." This was part of an annual cultural festival held in Assilah, a picturesque ancient fishing village and bare-bones seaside resort where inland Moroccans without the wealth to vacation abroad find refuge from the summer heat.

The event provided the familiar pleasures and frustrations that Americans face in small, poorer

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countries. We were transported in style—business class—but it had taken two dozen phone calls to get my prepaid ticket issued, and when I finally picked it up in the Athens airport, I saw that it was one-way only. "You'll get the rest when you get there," I was assured. There were two other passengers on my flight headed to the same symposium, a Spanish academic and an Argentine newspaper editor. Met planeside in Tangier, we were whisked through passport control and customs. A waiting car then took us to a hotel in Tangier some 25 miles north of Assilah, our hosts deeming the accommodations in town to be unsuitable for the likes of us.

It was mid-afternoon, and the desk clerk told us that our rooms were ready but had not yet been cleaned. That was an understatement. Changing into my bathing suit, I took refuge by the pool; although the hotel abutted the beach, large signs warned that swimming was not advisable (apparently due to raw sewage). Many girls around the pool wore skimpy bathing suits, and I wondered how many of them were European, how many local.

Three hours later, when it was time to board the bus for the opening session, my room still lay in the filthy state in which I had found it. Our group of conferees was accompanied by motorcycle police, two of whom rode ahead, waving traffic off the two-lane highway so that our busload of deep thinkers could reach its destination unimpeded.

We were about 30 in number. As we seated ourselves around tables arranged in a large square, the chairman unexpectedly approached me and the other American present and asked if we would make opening statements. My compatriot's remarks were not very controversial, but I decided to speak bluntly about the three decades of attacks visited on Americans by Middle Eastern terrorists. These were not an expression of Islam, I stipulated; some of the attackers had come from secular Marxist-Leninist or nationalist groups. Rather, they were an outgrowth of an unhealthy political culture of violence and extremism that held sway in the region and that the United States was bent on altering by spreading democracy.

Various Arab participants sought the floor to rebut me. They were spearheaded by a professor of political science from the American University of Cairo who, unable to control her rage, shrieked that my remarks were "unacceptable" and, because they were being heard by such a large audience, also "dangerous." She pointed to the spectators, about 200 townspeople seated amphitheater-style around and behind us. Each of her denunciations brought resounding applause from this gallery.

I began to wonder what I was doing there. "Unacceptable" and "dangerous" comments should be stopped, one supposes. Even if the crowd did not pose a physical threat, it occurred to me that I might just pick up and leave the next morning (until I remembered that I was still without a return ticket). But soon our official host, Foreign Minister Mohamed Benaissa, arrived to take the chair and announce that demonstrations from onlookers were out of order. As a sense of decorum was restored, I took the floor to protest my treatment. When the session adjourned and we were heading back to our bus, several of the Arab participants came up to express their friendly feelings and to say that the Egyptian woman's attack had been out of line.

WAS IT a coincidence, I began to speculate, that here, as at the summer institute, the shrillest voices were Egyptian? Nor had these been my only recent encounters with Egyptian intellectuals of extremist bent. On several occasions I had had the chance to appear on talk shows on al-Jazeera, and been given an interesting taste of this Qatar-based station whose broadcasts have revolutionized television in the Arab world. Once I was paired with an Egyptian professor who opened with the remark that the last 2,000 years were one long story of unprovoked mistreatment of the Arabs by Westerners. (I parried this lightly, pointing out that, since my country had only recently celebrated its bicentennial, we Americans could not be held responsible for the first 1,800 of those years.) In a subsequent appearance on the same show, which al-Jazeera calls its equivalent of *Crossfire*, I found myself up against an Egyptian newspaper editor who made the professor look mild by comparison.

The subject was, "Can we trust the Americans about weapons of mass destruction [in Muslim countries]?" The moderator introduced the subject by using the word "lie" eight times, as in "the Americans always lie" and "everything they say is a lie." Then he turned the microphone over to the Egyptian, who spoke the word "lie" in a similar vein ten times in succession, for good measure throwing in two "Hitlers" as in "George Bush and the Americans are worse than Hitler." Before giving me a chance to say anything, the moderator then announced the first results of the station's call-in poll; lo and behold, on the question "can you believe the Americans?" fully 88 percent had responded in the negative.

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Recent survey data suggest that my miscellaneous encounters may indeed be reflective of Egyptian public opinion. Zogby International asked people in a variety of countries whether they liked Americans. Usually, even in countries at odds with the U.S., the answer to this question is "yes": for example, French respondents in Zogby's poll affirmed their liking for Americans by more than 2 to 1. But more Egyptians responded negatively than positively, by a ratio of 47 percent to 35 percent. Asked their overall opinion of the United States, 86 percent of Egyptians registered themselves unfavorable and only 14 percent favorable.

Could it be that Egyptians feel so discomfited by their peace treaty with Israel that they strive to present themselves as the most militant of Arabs? At the Assilah symposium, one of the more conciliatory Arab participants told me that, although the Egyptian woman had called me anti-Muslim, she herself was not a Muslim but a Copt. If the Egyptians feel driven to be the most Arab of Arabs, might a Copt have felt compelled to appear the most Egyptian of Egyptians?

Whatever the cause, my attacker had clearly overplayed her hand, and she failed to appear for the next morning's session. We Americans having already spoken, it was now the Arabs' turn to tell us what they thought. An adviser to the Moroccan king complained that "the U.S. has accused the Muslims very unjustly of terrorism," while several others, seconded by the Spaniard, offered excuses for terrorism on the grounds that all governments engage in it in some form and/or that it represents an understandable cry of despair. There was more, and worse. A jovial Sudanese listed in the program as a "penseur" explained that the United States had "fixed" the UN report on the Jenin battle of 2002 so as to deny that Israel had in fact committed a massacre. A famous Pakistani took a turn, prefacing his remarks with an apology for his inability to address the group in Arabic, a deficiency that he blamed not on his own lack of learning but on "the heritage of colonialism." A Paris-based Algerian intellectual expatiated on the problem that "there are no words in Arabic for mytho-history and mytho-ideology," leaving me to wonder what the English words for these terms might be. A bit later, my countryman, seeming to pander to the crowd, offered up the thought that we are all victims of distorted news media: "You have al-Jazeera and we have Fox."

But this litany of victimhood, fantasy, moral equivocation, finger-pointing, and obscurantism was not the whole story, either. Despite administrative glitches, the Moroccans' hospitality was warm and generous. A hosted lunch at a seaside restaurant, for example, consisted of a large tossed salad topped with cold fish, or so I thought until salad was followed by a hefty paella and then, for the main course, platters overflowing with four or five species of fried fish.

On a substantive level, both within the sessions and outside, several Arab participants gave an impression dramatically different from the prevailing whine. I was approached by a young man from the audience, none too well groomed and dressed in a white *jalaba*: "I listened to you yesterday," he wanted me to know, "and what you said was painful to me, but I think we need to hear it." A Lebanese editor of a journal of international affairs interviewed me at length, for publication; although he did not appear to be buying most of what I was selling, he was interested and believed his readers would be, too.

On the bus, I had a long chat with a UN official based in Paris whose nameplate listed his country as "Palestine." It turned out he was an Israeli Arab. He shared with me his diagnosis of Arab ills, pointing to the lack of a work ethic and the preference for inherited over earned wealth. Emblematic of the problem, he said, was a poem still being taught in Arab schoolbooks in which the poet derides a rival because the man's uncle had been a manual laborer. As for the conflict between the Arabs and Israel, he had a proposal: get the Egyptian and Jordanian armies to police Gaza and the West Bank. It was not the most realistic of solutions, but it was based on a certain sympathy for both sides. At the end of the symposium, one of the Moroccan organizers expressed a sentiment in poignant contrast to the anti-American rage I had heard from others. "Don't think badly of us," she said on parting.

The most remarkable person I met at the symposium was Ali, an Iraqi exile living in Morocco. In the formal session, while others deflected responsibility or made alibis, he asserted: "Our societies have failed to move into the modern world because we have accorded no importance to the acquisition of knowledge." A writer, Ali let me see one of the few short stories of his to have been translated into English. Titled "Fear," it depicts a man who has had his tongue cut out and seems about to be murdered by uniformed figures while the narrator, who loves him, is too frightened to intervene. It was, of course, a parable about Iraq or perhaps the whole Arab world.

As a sideline, Ali translates American fiction for publication, so that Arabs "can see the human face

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of America." Soon after our meeting, he translated a newspaper essay of mine on the need for Arab democracy and got it placed prominently in Morocco's leading paper. He planned, he told me, to return to Iraq, and to use some of the money he has earned, enough to make him comfortable by Iraqi standards, on creating a library in his native village in order to give its children a better opportunity to learn.

Ali had served as a critical reader of the draft of the second *Arab Human Development Report*, issued in October by the UN Human Development Program. The first such report, issued last year, was widely noted for its path-breaking criticism of the Arab status quo. Written by a team of a few dozen Arab intellectuals, it underscored three deficits in Arab life: freedom, knowledge, and women's equality. The new report, "written for Arabs by Arabs," elaborates on the knowledge deficit. Apart from its tediously familiar denunciations of Israeli "war crimes," or the "erosion of civil liberties" in the United States, it has much of genuine value to say and the courage to say it. The report decries the lack of "social and individual freedoms" that fosters "social and moral corruption [and] the absence of honesty" in the Arab world, and calls for "freedom . . . of opinion, speech, and assembly." Its indictment of Arab intellectual failure is capped by this damning datum: in the two decades ending in 2000, the Arab states together registered 370 U.S. patents, while Israel, with less than one fortieth the population, registered 7,662.*

SEVERAL MEMBERS of the team that produced the *Arab Human Development Report* are Egyptian, which suggests that while that country produces an abundance of extremists, it also produces at least some liberals. This point was driven home to me at still another conference I attended recently, this one in Europe but attended mostly by Arabs. The Egyptians I met there—a newspaper editor, a leader of a human-rights group, a businesswoman, and others—could not have made a more vivid contrast with those I had encountered in Crete and Assilah and on al-Jazeera. They were democrats, pro-American, and believers in peace with Israel. The editor even informed me that he had appeared before a meeting of the Arab League to make the case for the war against Saddam Hussein.

At this conference I gave a talk similar to my opening remarks at Assilah but harder-hitting. Afterward many of the Arabs asked pointed but respectful questions; the only participants who clashed with me directly were an Iranian who accused me of attacking Islam and two Jewish Israelis. One of the latter, a prominent Labor-party leader, objected to my assertion that the roots of terrorism lay in a political culture of violence and fanaticism rather than in poverty.

If both this conference and the symposium at Assilah furnished some evidence of a liberal countercurrent in the Arab world, I even had similar hints in connection with my appearance on al-Jazeera. The day after the broadcast of the program featuring all the invective about American "lies," I received four e-mails from viewers. I had gone into the show reminding myself to keep calm, but my prudent intentions had disappeared as I got down in the street, rhetorically, and slugged it out with the moderator and the Egyptian guest. I may not have sunk to their level of abusiveness, but I did lose my cool and afterward regretted it.

One of the e-mails was from a young man named Khoury. "Someone should have told you that al-Jazeera's audience is not the notoriously ignorant American public you are so used to speaking to," he wrote. "I was left wondering whether you are a liar (which I know you are) or whether you really are that stupid. I assure you the Arab public is NOT." And he went on, in a threatening vein. (I wrote back telling Khoury he was choking on his own hatred of America. He replied, to my surprise, "I am also an American," adding the boast, apropos of who-knows-what, "Less than thirty years old, I am independently wealthy and don't have to work a day of my life.")

But the other three messages were of a contrary tenor. One was from Ali, who said that "you handled the debate very well . . . spectators were impressed by your dignity." Another, from a young Kuwaiti, assured me that my opponent was an extremist not typical of Egypt. The third was from an Arab Israeli journalist who wrote: "[The] style of answering and commenting you presented is the best way of attacking the bigotry we Arabs are suffering from. Those TV stations and their guests are reflections of the intellectual misery of the Arab world." Of course, a sample of four is of no statistical significance, but as anyone who speaks or writes on controversial topics can testify, a ratio of three-to-one friendly responses is very unusual.

As summer gave way to fall, my students from Crete were still bombarding each other with messages on the Internet bulletin board, many of them

* For more on this report, see Robert Satloff's article, "What Do Arab Reformers Want?" starting on page 34 of this issue—ED.

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about the Arabs' relations with Israel and the U.S. One Lebanese staked out a staunchly pro-American position, including on the war in Iraq. Another strove to address Arab-Israel issues with steadfast fairness and balance. But a third vituperated against Israel and added: "If only the Americans would leave us alone, what a euphoria." More extreme were the Egyptians, especially the girl who had studied with Nasser's daughter. In one message, she made a point of sending personalized greetings to the other students, country by country, conspicuously omitting the Israelis. In other dispatches, the vitriol was more direct still.

One began: "Hi all, I would like you to read these two articles by an American writer." The articles, nearly 20,000 words in all, were by David Duke, former head of the Ku Klux Klan, and they gave a Nazi-like version of the role of Jews in American life, including the claim that it was really the Jews who bombed the World Trade Center. The Lebanese boy who strove for fairness reacted strongly: "I am ashamed of being associated with such an argument and wanted to assure everyone that no one in his right mind would advocate this bastard's ideas, nor would they listen to others who do." Once again the Egyptian girl was embarrassed. She had not known who Duke was, only that she liked what he said; in a private letter to me, she explained that she had been given the articles by "Dr. Asmat Abdel Magid, the former head of the Arab League and the former-foreign affairs minister of Egypt, the head of the negotiating mission in our peace agreement with Israel."

Other student postings presented more ambivalent sentiments. A Palestinian (not Gevara) wrote poignantly of his people's sufferings, then later spoke of having toured in Israel, commenting that "for a fifty-five-year-old country they didn't only make a great job, they made a miracle." In another message, after criticizing Israel and the U.S., he wrote:

> I want also to say sorry for all the victims of the last attack in a restaurant in Haifa . . . this is real terror and I am not afraid to say it as a Palestinian this is against Palestinians against every human being the stupid attack that also caused more than five Arabs killed and destroying property and also killing the peace process and innocent civilians I want to point out that also Palestinian are killed in every attack not only Israelis sorry I am so nervous I cant express myself . . . things will never be good again I am so desperate.

Then there was the Syrian who justified terrorism against Israel and even the September 11 attacks on America before sending warm personal greetings to Israeli students. As he put it, guilelessly: "Imagine [me] who has been overwhelmed by the idea of 'how to kill a Jew?' for eight years, now he has some Jews friend. This is something incredible." In another posting the same young Syrian dwelt on the source of his confusion:

> I really have a problem which makes me suffer. I feel that Ruthie, Yael (my dear friends) are very good people and I am proud of them and proud of th[e] great times at the [institute], but . . . I have been taught that those people do not say what really [is] inside them. . . . I have known this for 25 years and it is very difficult to erase it within three weeks.

No doubt it is. What this young man has been taught for 25 years, the Arab world as a whole has been taught for a good deal longer, and few have had his opportunity, however brief, to get a different picture.

In the end, I take away two contrary impressions from this congeries of experiences. On the one hand, the dominant discourse in the Arab world continues to be even more fraught with hate and fantasy than we Americans consider it polite or politic to acknowledge, especially in light of our present need to stress that the war against terror is not a war against Arabs or Islam. On the other hand, a contrary current is beginning to make an appearance, exemplified by Ali, by the Egyptians I met in Europe, by some of my students in Crete, and at least in part by the scholars who have produced the *Arab Human Development Reports*.

That such an element exists gives cause for hope, although perhaps not for optimism. In the 1920's, liberal movements flourished in Germany and Japan and came close to remaking those two societies, only to be vanquished by the superior power of authoritarians and militarists who set the stage for World War II.

The liberal movement in the Arab world today is weaker than its predecessor in Japan, and much weaker than its predecessor in Germany. Even so, the prospects for war and peace in the coming decades depend, critically, on whether it can somehow achieve a better fate.

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What Do Arab Reformers Want?

Robert Satloff

One of the more pleasant surprises to emerge in 2002—an exceptionally dreary year in the Middle East—was the inaugural volume of the *Arab Human Development Report* (*AHDR*). That path-breaking document, prepared by a group of courageous Arab researchers under the auspices of the United Nations Development Program, broke the mold of Arab scholarship (and of UN documents!) in speaking about the failings of Arab societies. Titled *Creating Opportunities for Future Generations*, it highlighted core problems—or "deficits"—in the three areas of education, freedom, and the status of women, and it challenged Arab regimes to change the way they do business lest the world's 280 million Arabs be effectively shut out of the 21st century.

By any reasonable standard, the report was a triumph. *Time* named it the most important publication of the year. A remarkable one million copies were downloaded from the Internet. As for the Arab governments at which it was aimed, whether they accepted its findings or not, they had to respond, and most did; some even refashioned their policies to take at least nominal account of the report's recommendations.

Now, amid much fanfare and publicity, a follow-up installment has been published as the first of three planned volumes on the three "deficits." This particular tome, *Building a Knowledge Society*, takes aim at Arab education, a field where there is certainly much to criticize, from mind-numbing rote learning in overcrowded pre-schools to the paltry sums spent on high-tech research and development. Whether it fulfills and extends the promise of last year's report is, alas, another matter.

Although highly polished, handsomely presented, and often insightful, this report is deeply flawed. Unlike last year's *AHDR*, which was largely devoid of political correctness, the sequel brims with it. Whereas the earlier volume rested on impeccable scholarship, this one reaches questionable conclusions based on suspect and sometimes easily refutable sources. Worst of all, the ideas and policies advocated in the report run counter to the interests and well-being of millions of people on whose behalf it claims to speak.

In saying this, I do not have primarily in mind the report's highly tendentious view of the United States and Israel—although that view is unmistakable. Whereas the original *AHDR* paid lip service to the Palestinian cause, this volume frequently cites both America and Israel as sources of a "grave threat" to Arab national security, to Arab dignity, to Arab economies, even to Arab education. The evidence it adduces for each of these charges is ludicrously thin.

The report's main criticism of U.S. policy is that the Bush administration reacted to the "bloody events" of September 11, 2001 with "extreme"

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counter-terrorism measures, which, by leading "to the erosion of civil and political liberties . . . diminish[ed] the welfare of Arabs and Muslims living, studying, or traveling abroad." The net effect of this "cutting off [of] knowledge-acquisition opportunities for young Arabs," according to the report, was "an average 30-percent drop in Arab student enrollment in U.S. colleges and universities between 1999 and 2002."

In fact, a closer look at the new *AHDR*'s meager documentation tells a different story. The "30-percent drop" is derived from an odd source, namely, numbers kept by a total of four Arab missions to the United Nations—Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, and Yemen. Of the four, one, Saudi Arabia, sends a disproportionately large number of students to the U.S., and does indeed appear to have racked up a 31-percent drop in enrollment over the years in question; but it also happened to whisk hundreds of its nationals out of the country in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, well before passage of the USA Patriot Act with its supposedly "extreme" counter-terrorism measures. The Saudi story overshadows the other three countries, whose statistics paint a much more nuanced picture, with one—Yemen—reporting barely any drop at all (188 students in 1999, 181 students in 2002).

The larger story, not mentioned in the report, is that Arab enrollment in the United States has been dropping for years. Chief among the reasons for this is the long-term Arab economic recession, which has prompted even "oil-rich" Gulf states to tighten their belts; instead of sending students abroad, many have expanded opportunities for university education at home. Even so, however, it is emphatically not true that America's post-9/11 policies have driven thousands of students away.

The most authoritative source on this issue is the Institute of International Education (IIE), whose website provides a detailed, country-by-country breakdown of foreign students in the United States. In a survey released in April 2003, the vast majority of U.S. educators reported "no noticeable change" in enrollment from Arab countries. While it is undoubtedly true that many students have encountered bureaucratic difficulties, and some may have chosen other educational options as a result, the *AHDR*'s claim is sheer bunk.

Similarly unsupported is the charge that, post-9/11, "the U.S. introduced ethnic profiling of Arabs and Muslims," and that "[m]any ordinary people were arrested for no reason except their affiliation to Arabs or to Islam." Although individual Arabs and Muslims may have undergone unpleasant experiences and even indignities as a consequence of heightened security procedures, every airline traveler—from elderly Swedish grandparents to Japanese schoolgirls—suffered, too. In fact, the federal government has consistently *opposed* the introduction of even commonsensical profiling based on age, gender, or ethnicity.

More alarming than these wholly unsubstantiated charges is the absence of even the slightest acknowledgment of the legitimacy of the fight against terrorism. Indeed, the word "terrorism" itself hardly appears in the text, and when it does it is invoked with derision. The events of September 11, 2001 are described as "bloody," "horrific," "fateful," and "tragic," but nowhere is this politically motivated, premeditated murder of thousands of innocents called "terrorism." (The report does not even make mention of the Arab terrorists who have struck *Arab* countries since 2001.) Nor, in its lament over the "Anglo-American invasion and occupation" of Iraq, does the report even hint at the possibility that the demise of Saddam Hussein might offer the people of Iraq—more than 8 percent of the combined population of all Arab countries—their first chance at real freedom.

Finally, when it comes to Israel, the new *AHDR* regurgitates charges so egregious that even United Nations bureaucrats—hardly known for their Zionist sympathies—have rejected them. The most disreputable of them concerns the Israeli military operation in Jenin in 2002, which gave rise to grossly inflated claims of a "massacre" and of "war crimes"; the charges, long since disproved by a UN fact-finding mission, are accepted at face value by the authors of the report. And while they find space for a footnote about Rachel Corrie, the pro-Palestinian activist who died at a home demolition in Gaza, one need not bother looking for a reference to any of the hundred-plus Palestinian suicide bombings that have claimed hundreds upon hundreds of Israeli lives.

Of course, the *AHDR* was not written for Americans, Israelis, or other Westerners. It is designed as a clarion call to Arabs, to "activate" what it calls "a dialogue among Arabs on ways to change the course of Arab history." What, then, does it tell Arabs, especially about the state of Arab education?

The diagnosis itself is extremely valuable. "Knowledge acquisition" in Arab countries, the report attests, is bad and getting worse. Spending on public education is on the decline, the quality of education is awful, women's illiteracy remains at

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alarmingly high levels, and the Arabic language has atrophied as a tool for creating and disseminating knowledge. Arabs have fewer computers, newspapers, radios, and television sets, and less access to the Internet, than people in virtually every other region of the world. The media in Arab countries suffer under sharp restrictions: censorship is rife, and most outlets, especially electronic ones, are owned or controlled by the state. Arabs write few books and translate even fewer, and, to judge from the number of scholarly publications and patents registered, they contribute far less than their rightful per-capita share to the sum of human knowledge.

Arab states spend billions in capital investment—buildings, factories, machinery, and equipment—but very little on research and development and virtually nothing to promote innovation, curiosity, or creativity. Arab students, and Arabs generally, know how to import technology but not how to adapt and internalize it, let alone improve it. As a result, most Arab countries have been left with aging infrastructure, obsolete technology, and millions of unskilled and unproductive young people. Even the good news is bad: the tens of thousands of Arabs who do succeed in acquiring marketable degrees in medicine or technology or the sciences tend to flee their homelands for the West, contributing to an enormous "Arab brain drain" over the past decade (a fact the authors conveniently forget when complaining about the alleged decrease in Arabs allowed to study in the United States).

So, what is to be done? The *AHDR* strikes a necessary but deliberate balance, recalling the appreciation for learning that once animated Arab civilization while simultaneously chiding today's Arabs for their frequent resort to nostalgic appeals to bygone days of glory. Speechifying about past intellectual grandeur, they argue, does little to prepare Arabs for the challenges of today. Rather than "living on history," Arab culture "has no choice but to engage in a new global experiment."

At the social level, the *AHDR* recognizes that building a "knowledge society" requires input from all segments—"decision-makers, the business sector, the civil society, and the household sector" (by which artless term it presumably means families)—and it offers specific suggestions for each. Most importantly, the report breaks new ground in drawing a link between education and freedom, arguing that "democratic transformation in the Arab world is a fundamental condition for the independence of knowledge." This can only be achieved by guaranteeing the key freedoms of opinion, speech, and assembly "through good governance bounded by the law."

As for practical recommendations, the *AHDR* offers dozens of wise and creative ideas to improve Arab education and enable Arabs to become full partners in the information revolution. These range from giving priority to early-childhood learning, to extending compulsory education to grade ten, to developing systems of "life-long learning." (Given the vast sea of Arab underemployment and unemployment, one wonders why vocational training does not even rate a mention.) The authors outline ways to promote Arab translation capacities, increase public-private partnerships in basic and applied research, and make Arab universities and industries more attractive targets for international investment. And they call for a fundamental overhaul of the Arabic language in order to render it a flexible and accessible medium in which the hoped-for new generation of Arab scientists, technologists, and researchers can pursue their work in their own countries.

IF THE *AHDR* stopped there, it would be, in all these respects, a triumph. For Arabs to be urging their fellow Arabs to look inward for solutions rather than demanding some international entitlement program is an act of political maturity that deserves respect and admiration. So important (and, in Arab terms, revolutionary) is this message of self-help that one is inclined to hold one's nose at the outbursts of "blame-America-and-Israel first" and simply applaud.

But there is more to this year's report than that. If one reads the text closely, a different and less attractive image emerges. It is the image of a group of 21st-century Arab intellectuals repackaging old and tainted wine in shining new bottles.

The name of the wine is pan-Arabism. Like Islamism, with which it shares certain characteristics, it is a politics of grievance, whose basic idea is that the Arabs have been victimized—first by the Ottomans, then by the hands-on colonialists of Europe, and now by Europe's Zionist implant and its faraway American guardian. Mixing myth, history, and tradition, pan-Arabists bemoan the demise of an ethnically cohesive, politically seamless Arab empire that stretched from the Atlantic to the Gulf, and view their artificial and arbitrary partition into separate countries as the supreme act of a strategy by foreign powers to divide and rule.

Historically, the pan-Arabists' solution for this enforced predicament has been Arab unity, sought through ever more radical means. After World War I,

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the conservative Sharifians of Mecca wanted to create a single state in the Arab East. (They settled for ruling separate entities in, briefly, Syria and then Iraq and Transjordan.) Then came the republicans, led by Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser, whose grand design to erase borders—the United Arab Republic, created in 1958, joined Egypt and Syria in a single state—ultimately collapsed when the Syrians realized that Nasser's formula for unity meant subservience to Cairo.

While the hearts of millions of Arabs were swept up by Nasser, the minds of many Arab intellectuals were attracted to Baathism, an ideological movement, originally conceived by Christian Arabs in the 1940's, that infused Arab unity with socialism. Taking a cue from fellow socialist states, Baathist parties seized power by force and then ruled with an iron fist in two of the three great Arab capitals, Baghdad and Damascus. (The third is Cairo.) Ironically, bitter competition for regional preeminence and ideological purity between the Syrian and Iraqi Baath parties eventually produced more Arab disunity than ever before.

To ordinary Arabs, pan-Arabism offered little. While providing adequate bread and considerable circuses, it failed to promote real progress. In numerous areas of public life—from politics to art, from health to education, from economics to national security—Arabs *talked* about working together, but talk was about the sum of it. The result was a region increasingly defined by Potemkin politics, in which monuments to cohesiveness—the Arab League, the Arab Collective Security Pact, and various Arab-unity projects—were hollow shells.

As a political movement, pan-Arabism died with the Six-Day war of 1967 and was buried with Anwar Sadat's journey to Jerusalem a decade later and the subsequent Camp David accords between Egypt and Israel. If the war underscored the emptiness of pan-Arab sloganeering, Sadat's initiative brought into the open the dark secret that all Arabs knew but did not want to admit—that hard national interest would trump the phantom of trans-border unity. Thereafter, nominal pan-Arabists of various stripes would continue to wield power—in Saddam Hussein's Iraq, in Hafez al-Assad's Syria, in Muammar Qaddafi's Libya—but their rule increasingly centered on survival, not ideology. Arab leaders today may go through the motions, but words cannot blur the reality of Arab disunity, which reached its nadir (so far) with the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the impotence of the intra-Arab response to it.

And Arab political reformers? Although their numbers are larger than is generally believed, they long ago discarded the romance of pan-Arabism for the hard work of achieving local change. Hence, for example, the mushrooming of tens of thousands of groups at the neighborhood, village, town, and provincial levels, groups that eschew ideology to make incremental improvements in the lives of real people.

While American officials continue to talk about the "Arab world," most Arabs know that it does not really exist. Lebanese have more in common with Cypriots than they do with Yemenis; Tunisians consider themselves closer to southern Europeans than to Omanis. Many Arabs would be surprised to know that Mauritania and Djibouti are Arab states at all.

This diversity reflects the way Arabs in different countries actually live and, properly appreciated, is not only congruent with political reformism but potentially one of the most hopeful components of a future democratic Arab world. But not all Arabs subscribe to it, and intellectuals least of all.

Some of these intellectuals are dinosaurs—especially the denizens of Cairo's lecture halls and newsrooms who espouse Nasser's themes of unity and confrontation as though British and French fleets were still steaming ominously toward Suez. But others, including a new generation, have made the transition from old-school ideologues to practical problem-solvers. They have attended Western universities or the local variants in Beirut and Cairo, and have escaped the crushing vise of Arab journalism and Arab academia by pursuing successful careers in international institutions (especially the UN), non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. Through it all, however, they have retained the essential element of pan-Arabism—which is that the 280 million inhabitants of the 22 Arab countries constitute a single nation, forged by history, defined by language, inspired by culture, and driven (for better or worse) by religion.

The new *AHDR* fits this mold. Even as it condemns the all-powerful Arab despotisms that have sucked the oxygen out of Arab societies for the past half-century, it appropriates some of the same thinking that has led Arab societies to their current sorry state. That may sound like harsh criticism, especially of a group of scholars whose noble goal is to inject the concept of "citizen" into the Arab political landscape. But precisely because people of ideas—from Baathists to Islamic fundamentalists—have a history of setting political agendas in the Arab world, one needs to hold Arab intellectuals to strict account.

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THE PAN-ARABIST disposition of the *AHDR* authors is evident in three main areas. First, after their powerful recitation of the faults of Arab education systems, they display an almost Nasserist preference for all-Arab solutions to what in large part are country-specific problems. In fact, they *reject* attempts by countries to solve their own problems by themselves. "Experience suggests," they write—without further documentation—"that attempts by each Arab country to belong to the world on its own usually result in that country assuming a marginal and dependent position."

The *AHDR*'s preferred alternative is classically pan-Arabist. It explicitly proposes the creation of "a strong pan-Arab information policy"; calls for a "centrally coordinated regional creativity network" to foster the cross-country study of sciences; and lobbies for establishing "an authentic broadminded and enlightened Arab general-knowledge model"—whatever that may be. In its most sweeping suggestion of all, the report sketches a vast language project to Arabize education, including higher education, throughout all Arab countries.

To the uninitiated, a suggestion that Arabs learn in Arabic must seem both obvious and innocuous. But in many Arab countries, few questions of social policy are as controversial as this one. That is because a sizable minority of "Arabs" are not Arabs. They range from the approximately five million Kurds and two million Turkmen in Iraq to the Berbers of North Africa, who constitute the vast majority of the population in the Algerian and Moroccan countryside, or perhaps 20 percent of all "Arabs." Many of these people do not speak Arabic as their mother tongue, and do not wish to learn Arabic in state schools.

Indeed, the quest for Berber cultural rights is one of the great swept-under-the-rug stories of the contemporary Middle East. In Algeria, it formed a key element of that country's bloody civil war; in Morocco, it has led the government to accept, in principle, the teaching of Berber dialects throughout the kingdom's school system. Shamefully, the *AHDR* barely touches on any of this; the word "Berber" appears just once in the entire text. Its zest for Arabization vitiates any concern for the indignities faced on a daily basis by millions whose language of choice has denied them access to government-sponsored public services, including elementary health care.

Whence this unyielding emphasis on the primacy of the Arabic language? It is assuredly more political than pedagogical. Arabic, we are informed, "is the main pillar of Arab solidarity, national unification, and Arab cultural unity." It is also the "bulwark against fragmentation emanating from 'Information Age Orientalists' who defend the multiplicity of Arabic dialects." In pan-Arabist lingo, there are few more damning epithets than "orientalist." With this dismissive put-down, the authors of the *AHDR* have loftily turned their backs on the tens of millions of Berbers, Turkmen, Kurds, and those Arabs who use idiosyncratic, local dialects every day but whose vast human potential is presumably of secondary importance compared with the needs of "Arab solidarity . . . and Arab cultural unity."

THIS CONNECTS to a second symptom of the pan-Arabist inclinations of the new *AHDR*. Its authors appear to have erased from both history and politics the mosaic of minorities that makes up Arab societies.

Despite the common perception of the Arab world as a religio-ethnic monolith, the large majority of states are actually multicultural entities. Sunni Arabs may predominate, but the region boasts a kaleidoscope of Berbers, Christians, Alawites, Druze, Kurds, Shiites, Circassians, animists, and a smattering of Jews. In at least four Arab countries—Iraq, Lebanon, Bahrain, and Oman—Sunni Arabs do not even comprise the majority. Only in the heartland of the Arabian peninsula does one find a minority-free zone of pure Sunni Arab stock.

A reader of the *AHDR* would be hard-pressed to find any acknowledgment of this reality. Instead, a few passing sentences combine traditional Arabist paternalism toward "sub-cultures" with a willful blindness toward inter-ethnic tensions. "Christians," notes the report, "have a recognized and dignified position in modern and classical Arab culture"—a condescending phrase that amounts to a gloss on the time-honored status of heavily taxed, socially burdened *dhimmis* in Muslim-majority societies. The report conspicuously refuses to address such contemporary scandals as the exodus and death of Arab Christian communities in the Levant or the enslavement of Christians in Sudan. A reader will look in vain for reference to the intra-Muslim mass murder of non-Arab Kurds and non-Sunni Shiites in Iraq—let alone any mention of inter-Arab indifference to these atrocities. Nor, perhaps needless to say, does the report deign to notice the rising flood of anti-Semitism in Arab countries, whether those (like Egypt) that until recently had sizable Jewish communities or those (like Saudi Arabia and Jordan) where Jews have not lived for millennia.

Although it throws a bone to the idea of "en-

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riching, promoting, and celebrating cultural diversity," the *AHDR* is actually an intellectualized endorsement of the old-time, pan-Arabist approach to non-Sunni Arabs in Arab countries—disregard, disdain, and dismiss. (Saddam's innovative contribution to this litany was to dismember.) This has profound implications for the report's larger mission: to promote Arab democracy. After all, there are few more important emblems of democratic development than respect for minority rights. While there is no reason to doubt the democratic commitment of the *AHDR* authors, what *type* of democracy they have in mind—that is, how "Arab democracy" might differ from accepted notions of the term—remains open to question.

And this leads finally to the third way in which the authors display their pan-Arabist tendencies. In their discussion of the role of religion in Arab public life, they commit the same sin for which they condemn Arab despots: exploiting religion to advance their political goals.

The *AHDR* does a commendable job of skewering the sympathetic relationship between Arab regimes and their cowed religious establishments, in which each benefits at the expense of ordinary people. (The report turns timid, however, when it comes to naming individual regimes.) From the censorship of novels to the forced divorce of "apostates," these two institutions—the state and the mosque—have found common ground in policing thought and controlling civil life. Freedom from these twin shackles, the report rightly contends, is a precondition for entry into the "millennium of knowledge."

But how does the *AHDR* suggest that Arabs free themselves from the stifling restrictions of a narrow, domineering interpretation of Islam? At the very moment when one expects a rousing appeal to the universal values of freedom, justice, and liberty—elsewhere, the report makes much of the need to incorporate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights into Arab jurisprudence—one finds instead an appeal to, of all things, the Qur'an:

> The time has come to proclaim those positive religious texts that cope with current realities. . . . Three fundamental conditions need to be fulfilled. . . . The first is to return to the moral, civilized, and humane vision that stands behind the essential objectives of Islam. The second is to free religion from the sway of politics and to free religious institutions from political authorities, governments, and radical religious movements. The third is to acknowledge intellectual freedom by reviving scholarship (*ijtihad*) and the protection of the right to differ.

The words sound nice and soothing, but the larger message is jolting. Apparently, the Arab intellectuals who wrote the *AHDR* believe the only hope for democracy in Arab countries is to beat the Islamists at their own game, by interpreting holy scripture in a way that will promote their form of liberal values. In so doing, however, they serve up a more palatable variant of the same religion-spiced stew that has been dished out for years. Thus, the report contains attractive boxes of quotations in support of learning and erudition taken from the Qur'an, from Muslim tradition (the Sunna), and even from the Bible.

To be sure, the clash within Islam between militants and moderates will determine the future of Arab (and other Muslim) societies even more than the clash between Islam and the West. Muslim voices of reason, compassion, tolerance, and moderation, whenever and wherever they are raised, deserve support and encouragement. But is the *AHDR* a proper setting for Qur'anic exegesis? Its authors are economists, sociologists, educators, anthropologists, and political scientists, not theologians. For them to base their call for a renaissance in Arab education on an appeal to religion, however moderate and forward-looking, only plays into the hands of those who argue that religion is, in fact, the proper context for defining all solutions to all problems. While it is reasonable for the king of Morocco—the scion of the prophet Muhammad and constitutionally recognized commander of the faithful—to issue a sweeping decree enhancing women's rights by reference to specially selected Qur'anic verses (as he did in October 2003), it can hardly be business as usual for social scientists in the employ of UN agencies. Besides, if all the democrats can muster to their cause is *their* religious texts versus the fundamentalists', the smart money will surely go to the Islamists, whose corner on divine inspiration is rather better established.

In brief, and at its most critical juncture, the *AHDR* cops out. Instead of speaking up against a skewed interpretation of religion that has poisoned minds for a generation, the authors tacitly extend succor to those who frame all debate in religious terms. Instead of making a straightforward case for political change on its own terms—the inalienable rights to liberty and democracy—it effectively cedes the playing field to the Islamists, thereby repeating the cardinal error of Arab governments for the last twenty years.

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WHAT, IN the end, accounts for the depressing turn taken by the 2003 version of the *AHDR*?

The vindictive diatribes against the United States and Israel may seem self-explanatory, but, as if in anticipation of raised eyebrows, the authors actually go out of their way to defend themselves on this score. It seems, as the foreword asserts, that some unnamed "observers" questioned the wisdom of even issuing a second report, fearful lest "special-interest groups might exploit [its] outspoken approach, to the detriment of Arabs." But, the foreword explains, the majority of the report's research team rejected that advice, certain as they were that "to leave the initiative to others would be the more ominous choice."

Whatever this is intended to signal—does the campaign for Arab democracy enjoy such a surfeit of allies that it can easily forgo the support of those who will be rightly repelled by the report's babbling anti-Americanism and disfiguring anti-Israelism?—the authors made their choice. Rather than taking the opportunity to inject some much-needed reason, balance, and scholarship into debates that have become intellectual gutter brawls, they chose to pour more fuel on the region's political fires.

As for their resurrection of pan-Arabism, there is no ready explanation. But the evolution from the first *AHDR* is as disappointing as it is clear. While the earlier report contains hints of pan-Arabist thinking, its main call was only for enhanced "Arab cooperation," which in itself is neither objectionable nor unwelcome. It is certainly a far cry from the numbing summons to conformity prevalent throughout the new volume, the effect of which is to obscure the many practical suggestions for repairing Arab education systems.

The Arab lands from the Atlantic to the Gulf are, admittedly, one tough neighborhood. The pen may be mightier than the sword, but these people—or most of them, anyway—still have to go home at night. Even so, the 2003 version of the *AHDR* is a disheartening reminder that, in the battle to reform Arab society, even the good guys have a great deal of explaining to do.

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Baghdad, with Victims

Steven Vincent

By late October, there seemed widespread agreement in the Western press that the United States was failing in Iraq, where I had been living for the past month and a half. Saddam Hussein, I was reminded by television reports and pieces on the Internet, was still at large; the weapons of mass destruction that had been the ostensible reason for American intervention were looking like figments of "sexed-up" intelligence reports, if not a plot by the Bush administration to deceive the American people; and, by precipitously overturning the rock of the Baathist regime, the U.S. had succeeded only in releasing thieves, kidnappers, rapists, terrorists, and suicide bombers to prey at will on the Iraqi people. With its faked reasons for embarking on military adventurism and its patent inability to fulfill its postwar promises, America had earned the enmity of the world. And rightly so.

In Baghdad, however, the picture could not have looked more different. Waiters smiled at me when I identified myself as an American, cabbies brushed their palms together in a good-riddance gesture as they declared, "Saddam gone, America great!," and on the campus of Baghdad University I was approached by a man who wished to tell me "how honored Iraqis are that the Americans came to rid us of a tyrant." Opinion surveys attested to the conviction of most Iraqis that their lives would improve over the next five years, and their desire that coalition forces remain in the country at least until law and order were restored. With additional numbers of Iraqi police on the streets, this was already happening—rates of all major crimes were dropping.

As for those elusive weapons of mass destruction, in my six weeks in the country I met precious few Iraqis who even alluded to them. Instead, they were focusing, with relief and gratitude, on what was perhaps the major reason Bush had cited for going to war—the removal of Saddam Hussein. "Even if those weapons turn out to be an excuse for America to invade Iraq, I say fine," remarked Nasser Hasan, a poet and former member of the Iraqi national chess team whose translation skills and insights I would find invaluable during my visit. "Whatever it took to finish Saddam." Or, as a painter named Muhammad Rassim put it, "in our minds, the end of Saddam Hussein was the reason for going to war."

How bad was Saddam? The question may seem naive: the answer, after all, lies in innumerable journalistic stories and has been documented, in hideous detail, in human-rights reports for everyone to see. But to appreciate the depth of Iraqi suffering under his decades-long rule you have to visit the country and absorb the seemingly endless individual tales of brutality and violence. They, in their nightmarish sum, constitute justification enough for the war against Saddam.

My own direct education began on my first day. The twelve-hour drive from Amman, Jordan to Baghdad ran through the area west of the city known

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as the "Sunni Triangle"—the traditional stronghold of Saddam loyalists. Here, in towns like Ramadi and Faluja, was where Baathist holdouts and their foreign recruits were still ambushing U.S. soldiers. As we drove, stretches of lush greenery rose up inexplicably from the surrounding desert. An Iraqi-American traveling with me explained that, to reward his followers, Saddam had created this "Garden of Eden" by diverting water from the Euphrates. But, as with everything in Iraq, that was not the whole story. In the early 1990's, seeking to suppress a revolt in southern Iraq, Saddam had dammed, burned, and bombarded nearly 12,000 square miles of marshes, causing catastrophic ecological damage. "In his way," commented my traveling companion, "he both turned a desert into a garden and a garden into a desert."

Like most moderately informed Americans, I had read stories of Saddam Hussein's cruelty: the estimated 5,000 killed in the 1988 poison-gas attack on the Kurdish city of Halabja, for example, or the grisly 1999 murder of the Shiite cleric Sadeq al-Sadr (Saddam's thugs drove nails into the grand ayatollah's head after first raping his sister in front of him). I had tended to relegate such tales to a familiar catch-all category: more evidence of the sorry state of world affairs. Not until the fall of the tyrant and my decision to see postwar Iraq for myself did I begin reading the documents prepared over the years by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and other monitoring groups. They were shocking.

THE FIRST thing I discovered was that it was nearly impossible to compute how many people the tyrant had actually killed, whether by direct or indirect means. In 1980, for example, Saddam initiated his eight-year war with Iran, leading to the combat deaths of perhaps 375,000 Iraqis; in 1987-88, the notorious Anfal campaign to suppress anti-government sentiment in the Kurdish-dominated area of northern Iraq managed to do away with 100,000 people (including the inhabitants of Halabja). In 1990, he invaded Kuwait, provoking Gulf War I, which resulted in perhaps another 100,000 Iraqi combat deaths. Then there were the untold thousands of lives lost in the aftermath of that war, when Saddam brutally put down Shiite revolts in the southern part of the country. As for Gulf War II, an accurate tally of Iraqi combat and civilian deaths is still unavailable, but we can add to the bloody account every loyalist killed by U.S. troops and every innocent Iraqi caught in a crossfire.

This does not include summary executions. The UN and human-rights groups have noted Saddam's habit of "cleansing" prisons by killing their inmates. The record is appalling: in 1984, 4,000 political prisoners killed at the Abu Ghraib jail, and 2,500 more between 1997 and 1999; from 1993 through 1998, 3,000 inmates killed at the Mahjar prison, often by machine gun. In the south, Saddam murdered more than 100 prominent Shiite clerics. In 1999, security forces fired into a demonstration and killed hundreds of civilians, including many women and children. "Nonjudicial" executions of criminals and army deserters, often by means of beheading, likewise ran into the thousands.

To dispose of the bodies, Saddam resorted to the expediency of mass graves. More than 100 of these bleak sites have been unearthed from the Kurdish north to the Shiite south, with perhaps hundreds more waiting to be dug up. (In September, British authorities unearthed some 25 bodies buried under a traffic island in Basra.) The discovery of these killing fields has generated heartbreaking television scenes, with images of people frantically untying parcels of bones for evidence of missing loved ones. In one haunting scene, a man held a small bag of skeletal fragments to his nose as if to inhale the scent of his murdered son.

But in the catalogue of Saddam's evil, perhaps the most gruesome entry concerned the use of torture. Favored methods included the disfigurement and branding of criminals, such as chopping off fingers or tearing out tongues that had uttered anti-Saddam thoughts. Other methods involved rape, electric shock, beating with an axe handle, the penetration of victims' limbs and chests with a power drill, or the gradual lowering of bound captives into a bath of acid. Men were fed alive into wood-shredding machines. A general who had earned Saddam's displeasure was devoured by rabid dogs. According to one macabre report, women prisoners were forced to eat chunks of their own flesh that Baathist thugs had sliced from their bodies.

Then there were the refugees: nearly 100,000 Kurds driven from their homes in the Anfal campaign; 500,000 Shiites rendered homeless by the destruction of the southern marshes. Beginning in 1969, Saddam deported from Iraq tens of thousands of so-called Kurd Failyi, or people with the ill luck to be both Kurdish and Shiite; at least 10,000 of these unfortunates who once lived in the area of Baghdad are still missing, their whereabouts unknown.

The list goes on, extending from the massively grotesque to the petty—people forced from jobs, or denied jobs, or harassed by security officials, or simply forced to live lives of self-censorship and fear. Saddam's tyranny was complete, total, inextricably intermixed with the living cells of Iraqi society like a can-

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cerous tumor that, under the world's neglect, grew and grew until forcibly removed by the United States.

Still, these were only reports, and I needed to hear with my own ears the testimony of survivors. And so one of my first stops in Baghdad was the National Association of Iraqi Human Rights, located in the Mustansiriya district northwest of the city's center.

"I deserted from the army and spent five years hiding from Saddam Hussein," said Asad al-Abady, the association's deputy director. His was one of the milder cases of persecution I heard about over several afternoons seated on a hard sofa in his sparsely furnished office. Founded in 1996 in Jordan—where its current director still lives—the association has seventeen offices throughout Iraq, making it the oldest and largest of the country's four human-rights groups. Its purpose is to collect information and personal testimony on a range of issues, from the plight of Iraqi refugees to instances of torture, rape, and execution. The idea is eventually to present the findings to the new ministry of human rights and the ministry of justice.

When I asked Abady about the number of case histories his group had accumulated, he responded by holding up a single gray folder. "This is a Baath party list, made in 1987, of 33 people whom the regime arrested in 1980 and who were at that point still awaiting trial. Sixteen years later, we have no idea what happened to them." He dropped the folder into a cardboard box filled with similar folders and slid it across the floor. "If you knew the contents of this one box alone, you would faint." Then he took me to a dusty room on the building's second floor, where, illuminated by sunlight filtering through a filthy window, stacks of folders lay toppled by their own height and strewn about in unequal piles. "We have," Abady noted, "seventeen more rooms like this in our branches across the country."

A typical case involved an elderly woman named Maha Fattah Karah, whom they summoned to speak with me. Shrouded in black purdah, she settled into a chair in Abady's office and in animated Arabic (translated for my benefit by the poet Hasan) began her story. In the 1980's, her husband had fled to Iran to avoid arrest by Baathists, who claimed that he had been "unfaithful" to the regime. The party then confiscated Maha's home and belongings, throwing her into the street with her three children. A few years later, Baathists arrested her eldest son on the same charge of unfaithfulness and executed him—taking pains, Maha noted, to charge her for the price of the bullet. Hearing about his son's death, Maha's husband returned to Iraq, only to be seized by security agents, imprisoned for five years, and executed. He was buried in a graveyard, but the regime forbade Maha or her surviving children to visit it.

At this point, the woman became so shaken that Abady motioned me to stop questioning her. Rising from her chair, she stretched out her palms and began to plead. "I look to America," she sobbed. "I ask America to help me. I ask America not to forget me." Then, supported by two young men, she turned and left.

Abady's office had by now become crowded with men. When I asked about mass graves, a murmur passed among them. According to one of them, a doctor named Abdul Hadj Mushtak, the group had discovered three huge burial sites just south of Baghdad, each containing between 14,000 and 17,000 skeletons. "Iraqis knew generally where these places were, but not exactly," Mushtak recalled. "Our investigators found them and alerted the U.S. authorities."

The story was taken up by Fadel Abbas Kazen, a lawyer who was one of the first on the scene at a killing field near the village of Emam Baker bin Ali. "Bones and skeletal remains lay just under the surface of the earth," he told me. "I watched as people began digging up bodies, some of them with clothing still hanging from the bones. Some people had been killed before being buried, but some had been buried alive." In some cases death had come so unexpectedly that women who had gone to fetch water from a nearby river were buried with basins still clutched in their hands. "Behind a nearby police station, we found another grave containing fifteen more bodies," Fadel continued. In the following days, he oversaw the reburial of some 670 skeletons. "In a thousand years, there have been few tyrants like Saddam Hussein," the lawyer finished, fingering his prayer beads.

I heard this refrain numerous times in Iraq: Saddam's evil was in a category of its own. Because his regime lasted 35 years, because Iraq is a relatively small nation, because he was so open and boastful about his tyranny—and because the outside world seemed so ready to ignore his crimes—there seemed no way for Iraqis to escape his grasp. "I have lived my entire life with that man in power," said Rand Matti Petros, the twenty-six year-old manager of an Internet café in Baghdad. "I wake up each morning terrified that I've been dreaming and he's not really gone."

The painter Rassim described to me how the mere act of talking with foreigners at an art exhibition could result in being hauled away for hours of questioning by the dread Mukhabarat secret police.

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(A sculptor by the name of Haider Wady related that he had had to fend off demands from the Mukhabarat to procure foreign women for them to "date.") Mushtak recalled how his teenage son had once blurted, "I hate Saddam Hussein!" to a group of close friends, only to find himself arrested a few hours later. The police demanded a million Iraqi dinars to free him, and then 200,000 more. "My wife and I never discussed politics in front of our children," he told me. "We never knew when one might accidentally reveal something to an informer."

A few people I met had suffered worse and lived to tell about it. One was a former high-ranking Shiite cleric whom I will call Ahmed. In the late 1990's, accused by the Baathists of collaborating with anti-government Shiite groups in Europe, he was arrested and imprisoned for several years. In prison he underwent torture. "My hands were tied behind my back and I was hoisted off the ground, sometimes for as long as three days." He went on to describe how his captors shocked him with electric wires charged by a hand-turned military generator and beat him with thick rubber cables. Ahmed was now a broken man: the right side of his body had lost much of its feeling and his right leg, withered by disease contracted in prison, was no thicker than a man's arm. Growing more agitated as he concluded his story, he confessed that the greatest damage from the torture was spiritual, that "it made me question my faith. Today, I am an atheist."

STORIES LIKE these, defining the reality of Iraq under Saddam Hussein, made me begin to wonder how Iraqis were dealing with the fact that many outsiders seemed to question the value of their country's liberation. Among those I talked to, the prevalent reaction was sheer disbelief. "If they had lived for five minutes under Saddam they wouldn't think like this," expostulated an Iraqi translator for the U.S. military. Yet right in Baghdad itself there were quite a few such people: journalists, representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGO's), peace activists, and others who seemed to ignore the record of Saddam's crimes as they vented their anger against the war.

I met "humanitarian workers" in Baghdad who, even as they decried the U.S. "occupation" of the country, would fall into an embarrassed silence when I mentioned Saddam's atrocities, and "peace activists" who suggested that the terrible image the world has of Saddam Hussein was largely the creation of "U.S. propaganda." One Dutch photographer argued that Saddam's attack on Iran was no worse than "America's invasion of Vietnam" and that Baath-party members were mostly "guys just looking for jobs." When I tried to describe to a worker for a Canadian NGO some of the findings of the human-rights association, he shrugged and waggled his hand as if to say, "Yeah, yeah, we've heard all this before." Impatiently, he burst out: "Yours is the real rogue nation."

I asked Hasan what he thought of the seemingly worldwide resistance to acknowledging the horrible reality of Saddam Hussein's crimes. He began by reminding me that some Iraqis practiced their own form of denial: for the most part, these were small-business owners, older artists, and intellectuals who, while not actively collaborating with the Baathists, had nevertheless thrived on their support. (I had encountered a number of such individuals myself.) Then he turned for wisdom to Shakespeare. "People who 'forget' about Saddam are like Gertrude in *Hamlet*. She chose to 'forget' about the murder of her husband to get on with her life, and encouraged her son to do the same. But the voices of the dead will not be silent. Like the ghost of Hamlet's father, they will not rest until some sort of justice is brought to Iraq."

Justice: ask an Iraqi and you will be told that, along with freedom and stability, justice is the third reason why America needs not only to be in Iraq but to stay there. Because of U.S. power, Iraqis already enjoy an independent judiciary and a police force no longer made up of thugs and gangsters. Though Saddam himself remains uncaught, the continued presence of coalition troops is a pledge that his henchmen and *fedayeen* will not escape unpunished or fall into the hands of a vengeful mob but will face the just retribution of law. It is by means such as these, my interlocutors urged upon me, that Washington has given the Iraqi people, and perhaps the Middle East as a whole, something they never possessed before—a future. "There are no barriers for us now," a young Iraqi said to me gleefully.

That is not true, of course; there are barriers aplenty. The work of reconstruction—political, social, and cultural no less than physical—is gargantuan, long-term, and beset with peril. But increasing its difficulty is the historical and moral amnesia exhibited by the anti-war camp toward the crimes of Saddam Hussein. Castigating the United States rather than the tyrant it deposed, refusing to acknowledge the great good our nation has accomplished, these peace activists, Western politicians, international journalists, and intellectuals threaten the rebirth of the country for whose fate they profess to care.

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A Guide to Schwarzenegger Country

James Q. Wilson

You already know the story: the incumbent governor of California runs out of money. Having spent the entire budget surplus accumulated by his predecessor, he then goes on to sign bills that call for even more spending. To conceal the empty treasury without raising taxes, he adopts some accounting tricks. He is widely disliked by both liberal and conservative members of his own party. California, despite having one of the largest economies and enjoying one of the highest per-capita incomes in the world, is in trouble. To everyone's amazement, the voters begin to look seriously at a movie actor as a candidate to replace him.

I am writing, of course, of 1966. Pat Brown, a Democrat and a thoroughly decent man, was having great trouble paying the state's bills. To avoid raising taxes, he shifted California's accounting practices from a cash to an accrual basis, thereby allowing the state to count as "revenue" money due instead of money actually received. Left-wing Democrats hated him because he did not bluntly oppose the war in Vietnam; right-wing Democrats disliked him because he was too bold on civil rights. And so, out of the blue, came Ronald Reagan. Knowledgeable political operatives gave Reagan no chance to win, but he did, and by over a million votes.*

Not long after Reagan took office, I wrote an article for Commentary trying to explain to my uncomprehending Eastern friends why "this movie actor" had won.† My argument was that Reagan was not simply handsome and articulate but that he knew—indeed, he deeply felt—some things about the state that most outsiders (and even many Californians) did not. He knew that people wanted their government to be fiscally sound. He understood the enormous value that Californians attached to private property. He realized that most voters were upset by the student protesters who were disrupting the Berkeley campus of the University of California and by the rioting in the black community of Watts near Los Angeles. Reagan won the election *easily*.

His triumph, especially when put together with prior and subsequent gubernatorial victories by other Republicans—Frank Merriam, Earl Warren, Goodwin Knight, George Deukmejian, and Pete Wilson—gave rise to the view that California had become essentially Republican territory, a belief reinforced by the fact that Republican presidential candidates also carried the state in 1952, 1956, 1960, 1968, 1972, 1980, 1984, and 1988. And that is why, in turn, Bill Clinton's victories in 1992 and

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* I take this summary from Lou Cannon's splendid new history, *Governor Reagan: His Rise to Power* (Public Affairs, 592 pp., $30.00).

† "A Guide to Reagan Country," May 1967.

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1996 led some to conclude that things had changed again, and that California had now suddenly gone Democratic.

Things have indeed changed over the years, but California was never solidly Republican to begin with. It is, rather, a deeply divided state, with very liberal Democrats and very conservative Republicans clumped together. Electoral returns reflect this at every level.

The biggest divide, as Michael Barone has pointed out, is between "Coastal California" and "Heartland California." The former, consisting chiefly of Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, and San Francisco counties, is home to the liberal Left. The latter, consisting of Orange and San Diego counties and those in the Central Valley, is home to people on the Right. Each casts about half the state's votes. Coastal California voted for Al Gore for President in 2000 and Gray Davis for governor in 1998 and 2002. Heartland California voted for George W. Bush for President and, for governor, Dan Lungren in 1998 and Bill Simon in 2002.

But the picture is more complicated than that. A Republican gubernatorial candidate, in order to patch together a state-wide victory, must exercise broad popular appeal (as Warren did) or be on the right side of a compelling social issue like crime or rioting (as Reagan, Deukmejian, and Wilson were). To carry the state in a national election, a Republican presidential nominee has to be a political moderate (Eisenhower and Bush Sr.) or a favorite son (Nixon and Reagan). Otherwise, the Democrat will likely win. Especially in recent years, with the increase in the numbers of newly arrived immigrant groups, the state's liberal-Democratic orientation has been growing.

THE COMPLEXITIES I have sketched affect the way candidates from both parties campaign and govern. For one thing, even the state's conservative governors do not look so conservative when you examine what they have done in office. As Lou Cannon observes, although Reagan promised to "squeeze, cut, and trim" the budget, in his first week as governor he set in motion the largest tax increase in the state's history, and then went on to sign bills that made it easier to get divorces and abortions. George Deukmejian, defying the National Rifle Association, signed a bill limiting access to assault weapons. Pete Wilson was another Republican who raised taxes.

Analogous constraints operate on Democratic office-holders. Gray Davis was a former chief of staff to Jerry Brown, the most outspokenly liberal governor in California's recent history. But when Davis first ran for the state house in 1998 his approach was self-consciously pragmatic rather than visionary. His pragmatism even led him into negative advertising, as when he compared Dianne Feinstein, to whom he had lost the 1992 Democratic nomination for U.S. Senator, with Leona Helmsley, the convicted New York City tax evader. Although Davis lived in Coastal California, he got closer to Heartland Californians by supporting the death penalty; on taking office, he promised to "govern neither from the Left nor the Right, but from the center."* To satisfy the liberal teachers' union, he signed several bills concerned with improving education; to satisfy conservatives, he vetoed laws aimed at restoring bilingual education, reimposing racial quotas, and banning "racial profiling" in police work. He also opposed gay marriages.

What undid him was money. A ridiculous California law, passed before Davis became governor and supposedly intended to deregulate the electricity industry, led to rolling blackouts when the utilities, compelled to buy power on the high and rising spot market, were unable to sell it except at low, regulated prices. To "solve" the problem without raising consumer prices or revising the law, Davis signed long-term contracts with power suppliers at inflated prices and bought the state's power transmission lines for a staggering $12 billion. Meanwhile, he was throwing big sums at all manner of new projects. In just four years, he permitted spending to increase by $27 billion and the ranks of state employees to expand by 15 percent.

When the economy turned sour and tax revenue fell, Davis was left with a sobering dilemma: he had gone through $8 billion in accumulated surpluses and then proceeded to run up a whopping $38 billion in deficits. Although he was able to gain a second term by defeating Bill Simon in 2002, he did so by a narrow margin, winning fewer than half the votes despite facing an inexperienced opponent of pronounced conservative views plus minor third-party candidates. He might nevertheless have retained some political leeway had he not already given up so much ground. Liberals had long since ceased to see Davis as their advocate, and conservatives did not think of him as their friend. He had no political base; he had been, in effect, too centrist for his own good.

Not until this fall's recall campaign did Davis try

* This quotation and the following facts are taken from Michael Barone and Richard E. Cohen, *The Almanac of American Politics, 2004* (National Journal, 2003).

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to re-create a liberal base for himself. The Democrat-controlled legislature, fearful of a Republican resurgence, began passing a host of laws that in his early days in office Davis might well have refused to sign (and in one case had indeed already refused to sign): increasing environmental regulation, granting same-sex couples many rights once reserved for married male-female couples, allowing illegal immigrants to obtain drivers' licenses, and requiring many businesses to provide health insurance. Davis signed them all, eagerly.

But it was too late; you cannot create a political base at the last moment. Although most liberals did vote against his recall, about one-quarter of all Democrats voted for it.

California is indisputably the nation's leader in direct democracy. The state has held endless referenda on ballot propositions, and several recall elections. Three justices of the state's Supreme Court, including Chief Justice Rose Bird, were recalled in 1986.

I happen to be a fan of representative democracy, something that makes me instinctively suspicious of ballot initiatives and recall elections. I did not like California's voter-approved term-limit law, not only because (like all such laws) it prevents people from rewarding officials they like with reelection but because the California version simply leads politicians to trade one government job for another as their term expires. The voters also supported Proposition 187, which tried to apply clearly unconstitutional (and wrong-headed) restrictions on what illegal immigrants could do. If the courts had not overturned it, a little girl who showed up for first grade dressed in her Sunday best could have been barred from school because her Mexican parents had entered the country unlawfully.

Prudent fiscal management in California has been rendered vastly more difficult by still other propositions the voters have approved. Proposition 98 requires an expenditure of at least 40 percent of general revenue on K-12 education, whatever the state's other needs may be. Proposition 49, prominently supported by Arnold Schwarzenegger a year ago, commits a half-billion dollars a year to after-school programs. In 2003, the voters were asked to support a proposition that would commit between 1 and 3 percent of the general revenue to infrastructure like highways, universities, and prisons. (It was defeated.) According to an estimate cited by the *Los Angeles Times* columnist George Skelton, at least two-thirds of the state's general funds are "tied up by voter and federal mandates." Whether or not the mandated expenditures are affordable depends on general economic conditions; but this is no way to manage a budget or make decisions.

True, the voters have done some things I endorse, as when they curtailed the property tax (which in my view ought to be abolished altogether), eliminated state-managed racial and ethnic preferences, and drastically curtailed bilingual education. But no one has figured out a way to let the voters act on good measures while preventing them from passing bad ones. If I were still teaching Ph.D. students, I would give one of them that assignment.

In any event, recalling a governor while he is in office is a deeply troubling experience. Eighteen states now have recall provisions. In general the requirements are quite tough: in most states, according to Alan Greenblatt in *Governing* magazine, you need to gather signatures from at least 25 percent of the voters; in seven, there must be specific grounds for a recall, such as corruption or malfeasance. But in California, the process is simplicity itself. All you need are the signatures of 12 percent of the voters in the last gubernatorial election, which is hardly a difficult hurdle if you can find the money to hire signature collectors. Nor does the law oblige you to state any specific grounds for the recall. As for replacing the recalled governor, that is done everywhere else in a separate, special election; only in California is the balloting for a replacement conducted simultaneously with the recall vote. To be a candidate for this election, you need pay only $3,500 and gather 65 signatures, something that 135 people were able to do this year.

I was not a fan of Gray Davis, but he was elected and, absent impeachment, was entitled to serve out his term. The idea that 135 people could run for his office by writing a modest check was absurd. And yet, to give Californians their due, the results of the October election were neither absurd nor even close.

In the recall vote, proponents outnumbered opponents by 54 to 46 percent. In the balloting for a replacement, a few votes were admittedly wasted on publicity hounds: porn publisher Larry Flynt received 15,000, porn actress Mary Carey 10,000, and over-the-hill TV actor Gary Coleman 12,000. As if to underline the error of having a new governor selected in the same balloting as a recall, two candidates who had dropped out of the race much earlier, Arianna Huffington and Peter Ueberroth, collected 64,000 votes between them. Still, contrary to what many predicted, most people did not

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throw away their votes. Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante, the only prominent Democrat running, got 32 percent, while Schwarzenegger won 48 percent and State Senator Tom McClintock 13 percent, giving the two leading Republican candidates a solid 61 percent of the vote.

WHAT IS the lesson of the recall? Although there has been much talk about the transformation of American politics into a species of entertainment, this is much too imprecise a charge. To me, the California recall represents something more specific: the dislike many people feel for the politicians who are presented to them by the state's parties.

One can see this illustrated in the figures for voter turnout. If we go back a number of decades, to the statewide elections of 1962 and 1966, we find almost four out of every five registered voters in California casting a ballot; by 2002, that figure had fallen to slightly more than half. (Measuring turnout as a proportion not of registered voters but of citizens eligible to vote gives us a drop from almost 60 to a little over 30 percent.) For the recall election this past October, turnout rose to about 60 percent of registered voters, which is a high number but still way below the turnout in the 2000 presidential election.

In part, the decline in voter turnout surely reflects anger at the performance of particular elected officials. In a recent Field poll, only 19 percent of California's voters approved of the state legislature, and only 23 percent liked Governor Davis. (In 1998, fully 57 percent of the voters had approved of the state legislature, and in 2000, 61 percent approved of Davis.) But ten years ago, in 1993, almost exactly the same low opinion was registered both of the state legislature and of the then-governor, Pete Wilson. This is not a coincidence: then, as now, the state was in a fiscal crisis, and no one had much confidence in the likelihood of a budget being produced that made any sense.

Such specific circumstances aside, the growing popularity of direct democracy in California may well be traceable to dissatisfaction of another sort. The beauty of the recall system, which allows virtually anyone to become a candidate for governor, is that it bypasses the direct primary system—that is, the system whereby each party selects its own candidates for office. Those contests have increasingly attracted only the most highly motivated voters—i.e., very liberal Democrats and very conservative Republicans. Hence, the winning candidates tend not to reflect the average concerns of each party's voters.

Admittedly, this is less of a problem for Democrats, who typically elect liberals to statewide office, than for Republicans, for whom it means that the party winds up with very conservative candidates with little chance of winning a general election. The last two primary-chosen Republican candidates for governor were Dan Lungren and Bill Simon, both of whom espoused views well to the Right of the typical voter. The last several Republican candidates for the U.S. Senate were Tom Campbell, Matt Fong, and Bruce Herschensohn. That Campbell, despite his moderate views on social issues, lost to Dianne Feinstein was probably inevitable; she is the most popular elected official in the state. But that Fong and Herschensohn lost to Barbara Boxer, a very liberal Democrat who denounced the Persian Gulf war and Operation Iraqi Freedom, points very clearly to the failure of the primary system to find candidates who can attract centrist voters.

The recall campaign made it possible for Arnold Schwarzenegger and Peter Ueberroth to become serious gubernatorial candidates. I doubt that either man could have won a Republican primary. Schwarzenegger, after all, supports abortion, gun control, and strong environmental laws, and Ueberroth is likewise a moderate on social issues. Ueberroth eventually dropped out, as did Bill Simon, when neither was able to gather public support matching Schwarzenegger's. That left Tom McClintock, a Republican state senator who is not only an expert on government but a firm opponent of tax increases. Although some Republicans, eager to win the general election, urged McClintock to drop out as well, he refused, asserting that the voters were smart enough to decide for themselves.

He was right. Four days before the election, 47 percent of likely California voters told a Field poll they thought McClintock would do a good or excellent job as governor; only 41 percent thought that of Schwarzenegger. But, despite their confidence in McClintock, only 16 percent said they would vote for him. The reason was obvious: with his pronounced anti-tax views, he could not win. In the election he got 13 percent of the vote.

NO ONE knows what Arnold Schwarzenegger can do about the huge budget deficit incurred by Gray Davis and tenuously financed by issuing more state bonds to an unenthusiastic market. In the recall election, the leading Democrat, Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante, said that he would raise taxes, while on the Republican side, as we have seen, Tom McClintock offered a pledge of no tax increases at all. Neither is a viable strate-

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gy. Higher taxes would drive even more businesses out of the state, and in any case taxes never raise the amount of cash that is forecast for them. But a policy of no new taxes, unless it were accompanied by heroic (and unlikely) spending cuts, would leave the budget deficit in place.

Arnold Schwarzenegger pledged no new taxes unless they were really necessary. That is just about where Ronald Reagan was in 1967 and, coupled with Schwarzenegger's liberal views on social issues, was apparently what a lot of voters wanted to hear. But the challenge to the new governor is profound and possibly intractable.

California is apparently trying to become part of Scandinavia: it already taxes and regulates so heavily that many businesses and lots of ordinary people are leaving for states with healthier economic climates. According to the Tax Foundation, California has the second heaviest business-tax burden in the nation, and a personal income tax that is not only steeply progressive but much higher than that in the neighboring states of Arizona, Nevada, and Oregon. On top of this, the new governor is confronting a pro-tax legislature and powerful interest groups (teachers, prison guards, trial lawyers) who want him to spend even more. Even if he himself takes a tough line, the legislature can pass a budget only if two-thirds of its members vote for it. Liberals, who dominate, can easily block what they do not like; so can fiscal conservatives, who are but a small minority.

The temptation may be to go for still more direct democracy. Referenda, indeed, may be Schwarzenegger's only recourse if he hopes to lighten the fiscally crushing burden enacted by California's Democrats in the last four months while Davis was eagerly trying to capture their support. Since there is little chance the legislature will repeal what the new governor does not like just because the new governor does not like it, he may have to ask the voters to do it for him. (Already a movement is under way to gather enough signatures so that the voters can decide what to do about drivers' licenses for illegal aliens.)

But the danger here is all too evident: having replaced Davis via a recall campaign, Schwarzenegger can himself be confronted with such a campaign at virtually any moment. In California, anybody with access to money can keep the heat on a governor more or less permanently.

Nor is recall fever likely to be limited to California. Alan Greenblatt quotes the director of the Initiative and Referendum Institute, M. Dane Waters, as saying that he has been inundated with phone calls from people who want to know how to start recall efforts in their own states. To do it as readily as it is done in California would require much easier constitutional rules than now operate in those states, but that is not impossible to bring about. After all, over 60 percent of American cities already have recall provisions; in the five-year period ending in 2001, recall elections took place in about 10 percent of them. The expansion of access to easy recall would plunge goverment still further into an exercise in incessant public-opinion polling and electoral politics into a permanent campaign—a benefit to hired political consultants, surely, but to no one else.

Can California at least hope for a change in the law *regulating* recalls, perhaps altering it so as to exclude fringe candidates who seek only publicity, or ensuring that the recall of an elected official can happen only under circumstances of malfeasance, corruption, or neglect of duties? I doubt it. When the Field poll asked California voters in late September whether the recall law should be changed, only 39 percent wanted to make the process more difficult, while 54 percent preferred either no change or a process that was even easier than at present. The problem with direct democracy is that people like it.

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OBSERVATIONS

In Arthur Miller's America

Carol Iannone

WHEN ARTHUR Miller heard that audiences were weeping night after night during the hugely successful Broadway run of *Death of a Salesman* in 1949, he was displeased. The play was not supposed to be mere "emotional entertainment," as Martin Gottfried explains in his new literary biography, *Arthur Miller: His Life and Work*.* It was intended, by the playwright's lights, "to make people think." Unfortunately, after a couple of Broadway successes in the postwar years, Miller's increasingly determined efforts "to make people think" would contribute, over the course of the next half-century, to a decline not only in his popularity but in his critical reputation as well.

Today, with Miller himself in his late eighties, a reassessment would seem to be afoot. A number of his plays, including several more obscure ones, have reappeared on stage in recent years or been adapted for the screen. Gottfried's book is itself a plea for supposedly long-overdue recognition, and has moved some reviewers to praise its subject in the most extravagant terms. Could it be, as his admiring biographer insists, that Arthur Miller is indeed "America's greatest living playwright"?

MILLER WAS born in 1915 to well-to-do Jewish immigrant parents on Manhattan's Upper West Side. The Depression struck the family hard, however, and the garment business of Arthur's father, Isadore, began to decline. The Millers soon relocated to a small house on a dead-end street in the Gravesend neighborhood of Brooklyn, where their once-prosperous life became a struggle just to get by.

In the face of these hardships, Arthur's older brother, Kermit, quit his studies at New York University and went to work, first with Isadore in the family business and later as a salesman in a friend's carpet company. Arthur's response was quite different. Siding with his mother, who blamed her hapless husband for the family's reduced circumstances, Miller decided early on to escape from what he saw as a bottomless well of despair and failure. Though short of money and not much of a student, he managed to enroll at the University of Michigan.

There, under the tutelage of George Pierce Baker, who had also taught Eugene O'Neill, Miller turned to drama as a way to capture the reality, as he viewed it, of those hardscrabble years. A "brooding young man burning with all the injustices of the world" (as one contemporary remembers him), he drew inspiration from left-wing artistic movements like the Group Theater and the Federal Theater, and took part in the 1940's in writers' meetings sponsored by the Communist party. He aspired to create plays that would raise awareness, change consciousness, reform society.

After several early failures, Miller finally hit it big on Broadway with *All My Sons* (1947) and *Death of a Salesman* (1949), both of them about men whose values have been badly disordered by a materialistic society and its false notions of success.

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From his experience as a witness before the House Committee on Un-American Activities in the early 1950's—unlike his friend, the director Elia Kazan, he would refuse to "name names," thus emerging as a minor hero of the Left—Miller fashioned *The Crucible* (1953), using the Salem witchcraft trials as a metaphor for the anti-Communist fervor of the postwar period. *A View from the Bridge* (1955)—another tale about "informing," this one set among Italian immigrants in Brooklyn—soon followed, but it enjoyed little of the success of its predecessors.

INDEED, BY the 1960's, Miller's star had begun to fade. *After the Fall* (1964) was savaged by the critics (though it enjoyed some Broadway buzz because of its thinly veiled treatment of the playwright's failed second marriage, to Marilyn Monroe), and *Incident at Vichy* (1964) fared no better. Only *The Price* (1968) was fairly well received.

The story was much the same throughout the 1970's and well beyond. Play after play by Miller met with withering critical contempt and closed after a brief engagement, sometimes even before making it to New York. Most of these works—*The Creation of the World and Other Business* (1972), *The Archbishop's Ceiling* (1977), *The American Clock* (1980), *The Last Yankee* (1991), *Broken Glass* (1994)—are unfamiliar to American theater-goers. Critics tended to find them preachy and pretentious, filled with heavy-handed social criticism or the playwright's self-involved psychologizing—or both. As Kenneth Tynan wrote witheringly of *After the Fall*: "You get the feeling that if only Mr. Miller's hero could expiate his multiple guilts, the future of Western civilization would be assured."

Miller's reputation was kept afloat, however, by his early plays. *Death of a Salesman* and *The Crucible*, especially, achieved a kind of classic status, winning frequent performances in regional theaters in the U.S. and in major houses all over the world. They also became staples of the classroom, joined on the library shelf by an armload of companion literature and study aids.

The opening salvo in Miller's full reemergence was Dustin Hoffman's unexpectedly acclaimed Broadway production of *Death of a Salesman* in 1984. The 1990's saw successful New York revivals of *All My Sons*, *The Crucible*, *A View from the Bridge*, and, in a Tony Award-winning production starring Brian Dennehy, *Death of Salesman*, not to mention a movie remake of *The Crucible*,* a version of *Broken Glass* for British and American television, and an operatic adaptation of *A View from the Bridge*, with its excitable Italian characters.† Even a number of the later plays were given new productions and accorded more respectful attention. At the height of this run, the PEN American Center honored Miller for lifetime achievement in a gala tribute at Town Hall in New York City.

MARTIN GOTTFRIED'S biography is exhaustive as far as it goes (it skimps somewhat, if understandably, on the last few decades of Miller's career). As one might expect from a New York drama critic of some 40 years, Gottfried places special emphasis on the plays themselves. This makes the book a plodding read at times—we learn how each play was conceived, written, produced, performed, received, evaluated—but also an invaluable reference (the index is excellent). Gottfried is especially good at rendering the feel of the internal world of the theater, evoking the moment of transition, for example, when a certain kind of sentimental drama was no longer viable, or describing the behind-the-scenes struggle among directors, producers, and writers that can lead to a play's success or failure. In the background of his discussion of Miller we also catch informative glimpses of the theatrical world of the past century, its trends, milestones, and varied personalities.

No less illuminating are the biographical details that Gottfried stresses, especially Miller's tense relationship with his older brother, Kermit. Talented and ambitious in his own right, Kermit emerges in Gottfried's telling as the self-sacrificing, dutiful son, the one who remained at his father's side at a time of need while Arthur, the prodigal, left to make his way in the world. During World War II, Kermit enlisted in the army (despite being married and probably exempt) and served heroically, fighting on Omaha Beach and in the Battle of the Bulge; Arthur did not serve (it is unclear precisely why) but instead worked in the Brooklyn Navy Yard as he continued his writing.

Once we know of this family background, indeed, it is hard not to see it operating in Miller's work. The opposition of two characters, one yielding to the claims of family and community, the other breaking into greater self-awareness, is a theme that runs like a bright red thread through his plays. It is the dynamic at the center of his first hit, *All My Sons*, in which two brothers cope very differently with the sins of a father who saves the family business during World War II by selling defective parts to the army, thereby causing terrible casualties among the young pilots. Similarly, in *Death of a Salesman*, one son, Happy, is brutally coarsened by his complicity with the values of his father, Willy Loman; Biff, the sensitive son, eventually sees through them.

Though versions of this dichotomy can be found in Miller's lesser works as well, like *After the Fall* and *Broken Glass*, it reaches its apotheosis in *The Price*, the most clearly autobiographical of his plays. The plot concerns (yet again) two brothers: Victor, who stayed with their fa-

* See Midge Decter, "The Witches of Arthur Miller," in COMMENTARY, March 1997.

† Reviewed by Terry Teachout in COMMENTARY, March 2000.

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ther during the Depression and became a humble policeman, and Walter, who escaped to become a hugely successful celebrity physician. Meeting years after their father's death, they heatedly trade accusations and justifications about the lives they have chosen.

With its subtle give and take between the two brothers, *The Price* can legitimately be regarded as Miller's most mature play. Still, by the end, the seeming nobility of self-abnegation has—once again—been unmistakably diminished. Victor may be the sort of person "the world depends on," as Miller himself has written, but Walter, his hard-charging brother, represents the "cruel and destructive" type without whom society would stand still—the prototype of the artist who "takes risks lesser men wouldn't dare take."

AS A THEME for drama, this tension can be productive. Miller's most successful plays project a certain emotive power, even occasional poetic intensity in the characters' alternately dazed and explosive efforts at self-understanding and mutual comprehension. When, for example, the younger brother in *All My Sons* finally denounces his corrupt father and strikes him, it is an electric moment, a memorable display of Oedipal defiance. But Miller's plays, as Gottfried and the playwright himself emphasize, are not mere explorations of family and personal dynamics; they are meant to be works of social criticism. In this connection, and for reasons as much political as biographical, the limits of Miller's work could not be plainer.

Gottfried inadvertently sheds light on this question when he discusses Miller's enduring popularity in Great Britain. It turns out that with every play that flopped here, Miller's eminence seemed to rise there, among the public and critics alike. For Gottfried, this suggests that the English simply are more engaged by talky "idea" plays, and Miller himself agrees. "British theater has long since openly acknowledged that social criticism is entertainment," he wrote recently in the *New York Times*. Perhaps more important, he continued, England "sees itself as basically a failed culture," as opposed to America's sense of itself as a success. "Failures tend to examine their suppositions about life," while "the successful are more likely to celebrate themselves as good examples."

Actually, it might be more precise to say that English audiences appreciated Miller's examination not of *their* suppositions but of ours. For the complacency of the bourgeois American family—the sort of family he understands himself to have fled, and which his plays so consistently excoriate—has long served Miller as a stand-in for the oppressive complacency of America itself. In his plays, one is never left in doubt that personal tragedy is social tragedy. When Biff, in one of the many histrionic moments in *Death of a Salesman*, declares, "I'm a dime a dozen, Pop, and so are you," his target is much larger than the wretched Willy Loman.

Though Gottfried acknowledges that most of Miller's later plays are filled with characters spouting wildly unrealistic, politically inflected dialogue, he fails to see the single animus that has long driven Miller's work—the willed resentment toward American society, the overwrought, obdurate sense of condemnation and outrage. In Miller's hands, tragedy consists not in the individual's encounter with solemn powers greater than himself. Rather, tragedy is the failure to stand against patent corruption and foolishness, in the form of such life-crushing American villains as demanding fathers, witless salesmen, and witch-hunting anti-Communists. The idea that society might represent something more than betrayal and wasted sacrifice, that authority properly wielded might be admirable, that the dutiful son and quiet hero might deserve even more honor than the creative types who challenge every stricture—all this seems beyond the imaginative capability of our "greatest living playwright."

Gottfried calls Miller a "typical liberal." It would be fairer to say that he is a strange artifact of an American Left whose formulaic slogans were once a fixture on the cultural scene but whose fortunes in recent decades seemed to have waned somewhat (at least at home). The comeback of Arthur Miller suggests that, like the hackneyed dramas embodying them, these slogans have neither died nor fallen away, but only lain dormant.

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ART

El Greco and His Critics

Steven C. Munson

> Again the gray of El Greco. . . . We agreed only concerning its animalic effect; coolness, "*froid glacial*!" ["icy cold"], said the marquis. I agreed, but *un froid qui nait du chaud* [a cold born of heat].

SO WROTE the German art critic Julius Meier-Graefe in *The Spanish Journey*, an account of his travels through Spain at the turn of the 20th century. As the translator J. Holroyd-Reece would explain in his preface to the English edition (1926), Meier-Graefe had originally set out to "worship at the shrine" of Velasquez, then "the recognized idol of contemporary scholars." But a funny thing happened on the way to the Prado. As Holroyd-Reece puts it, Meier-Graefe "went to Spain to come in contact with Velasquez the man, and he found a painter with a mean soul; this discovery was a blow as severe to our enthusiast as if he had discovered that his own father was the maker of false coin."

STEVEN C. MUNSON, *an artist living in Washington, D.C., contributed "On Discovering Bada Shanren" to our July-August issue.*

The repercussions were not long in making themselves felt. In writing *The Spanish Journey*, says Holroyd-Reece, Meier-Graefe "knowingly staked the reputation he was slowly making for himself by dethroning Velasquez." The book caused a sensation among critics of the day, not only "on account of his attack on Velasquez" but also because of his "announcing El Greco as one of the greatest masters of all time"—and this, at a moment when "the world at large had never heard of El Greco."

That was in the first years of the 20th century; just how quickly afterward El Greco did become known to "the world at large" can be judged by the public reaction to the acquisition and display of *The Agony in the Garden* (1590's) by Britain's National Gallery in 1920. As the critic Roger Fry wrote in an essay later published in his book *Vision and Design*:

> People gather in crowds in front of it, they argue and discuss and lose their tempers. . . . And what is more, they talk about it as they might talk about some contemporary picture. . . .[I]t is not like most old pictures, a thing classified and museumified, set altogether apart from life, an object for vague and listless reverence, but an actual living thing, expressing something with which one has either got to agree or disagree.

Reading Fry and Holroyd-Reece and Meier-Graefe today, one is struck by how fresh they seem, how vital to our own continuing response not only to El Greco but also to the painting of the last century. This may be a result of the fact that, as Hilton Kramer has recently written, there "remains very little in our experience of the arts even in the first decade of the 21st century that can be separated from the traditions that were established by what used to be called the modern movement but that nowadays tend to be known collectively as modernism." As champions of the modern movement, critics like Fry and Meier-Graefe played a key role in helping to establish those traditions, in part by relating the art of the distant past to that of their own time. "One of the greatest critics of our time," wrote Fry, "was

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showing me El Greco's *Laocoön*, . . . when he whispered to me, as being too dangerous a doctrine to be spoken aloud even in his private room, 'Do you know why we admire El Greco's handling so much? Because it reminds us of Cézanne.'"

These forward-and-backward-looking critics were not alone in making such judgments; so did many artists. In trying to explain why the El Greco at the National Gallery in London made the public "'sit up' so surprisingly," Fry observed: "That the artists are excited—never more so—is no wonder, for here is an old master who is not merely modern, but actually appears a good many steps ahead of us, turning back to show us the way." Among the artists who found a strong resonance in El Greco were Pablo Picasso ("Velasquez! What does everybody see in Velasquez these days? I prefer El Greco a thousand times more") and Henri Matisse ("Velasquez isn't my painter; Goya, rather, or El Greco").

WHO WAS this 16th-century painter that 20th-century artists and critics admired so much and felt was so deserving of careful study?

Born in Crete, then part of the Venetian Republic, in 1541, Domenikos Theotokopoulos—who would become known as "the Greek" (El Greco)—was the son of a tax collector and businessman. It is known from documentary records that he was already a painter by 1563. In 1567, he moved to Venice, where he became an avid student of the works of Titian, Tintoretto, and Bassano. From 1570 to 1576, he was in Rome, where he failed to meet with much success as an artist, winning only minor commissions.

Settling in Spain in 1576, El Greco made a bid to be commissioned as a painter for the court of Philip II, but was rejected. As Philippe de Montebello, director of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, writes, "Philip wanted clearly decipherable pictures that advertised his authority, not paintings that celebrated artistic genius." Fortunately, El Greco did find the recognition he sought in the intellectual and social circles of Toledo, where he moved from Madrid in 1577. Toledo would remain his home for the next three and a half decades, until his death in 1614. It would also prove to be the wellspring of his art.

As for that art, which so put off Philip II and, despite the esteem and material success El Greco ultimately won in his own day, consigned him to obscurity until he was rediscovered in the 19th century, here is how the collector Albert C. Barnes described it in his 1933 book, *The Art in Painting*:

> We see a design in . . . every part of the canvas, and in the canvas as a whole. . . . Each unit shimmers, glows, and flows into a pattern with other units—it is movement itself, but with an eerie, lurid quality that makes the drama otherworldly. No other painter has ever achieved the deep, supernatural mysticism of El Greco's religious subjects. In our materialistic age his subjects have comparatively little appeal; but his design, his plastic forms, are as moving today to the sensitive spectator as his subject-matter was to the Christian mystic of the 17th century.

Those who wish to see for themselves what Barnes meant now have an opportunity to do so thanks to the Metropolitan Museum, where (in de Montebello's words) "the most comprehensive and focused" exhibition "ever dedicated to the artist" is now on view. The exhibit encompasses some 83 works, arranged both thematically and chronologically in order to show, as the guest curator David Davies puts it, El Greco's evolution "from a post-Byzantine idiom in Crete, to a Renaissance one in Italy, and to that in Toledo, which he fashioned in response to the ethos of its religious life, and which reached a glorious climax in his late paintings." While there have been other recent shows devoted to El Greco—in Madrid, Rome, and Athens—this is the first major exhibit in the United States since 1982.*

The Met show has many virtues, not least its grouping together of similar paintings on the same theme or subject. Thus, one can see four versions of *The Purification of the Temple*, two versions of *Pietà*, two versions of *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, and two versions of *The Agony in the Garden* (although not the studio one that upset the crowds in London in 1920). There is *Laocoön*, the painting that rightly reminded one critic of Cézanne. There are two examples of El Greco's early post-Byzantine style, *The Dormition of the Virgin* and *Saint Luke Painting the Virgin and Child*, with their haloed figures, distorted perspective, and unreal drapery. And there are many large-scale renderings of the solitary figures of the saints. Among the elements at work in these and other pictures, one finds deliberate distortion of spatial planes and human proportions (the latter most evident in El Greco's famously elongated figures), an unnatural use of light, a dry brushwork, and a use of color, particularly gray, that is expressive rather than descriptive.

Then there are the easel-size portraits from life of Spanish noblemen, artists, intellectuals, and clerical figures. Though "realistic" in a way that the religious pictures are not, the finest of these, extraordinarily penetrating in their elucidation of character and personality, share much of the aesthetic appeal of El Greco's paintings of religious subjects. In this regard, it is useful to compare the heads in *An Elderly Gentleman* (*circa* late 1580's-early 1590's) and *Saint Paul* (*circa* 1610-14);

* The exhibition at the Met runs through January 11, 2004. After that, it can be seen at the National Gallery in London from February 11 to May 23.

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or the proportions of the head and body in *Saint Ildefonso* (early 1600's) and *A Prelate* (*circa* 1600-1610), whose huge fur coat is the center of visual interest; or the spatial distortion in *Saint Jerome as a Scholar* (*circa* 1600-14) and in *Fray Hortensio Felix Paravicino* (*circa* 1609); or the almost rigid design of *Christ as Savior* (*circa* 1600) and *Nobleman with his Hand on his Chest* (*circa* 1583-85).

So much of the pictorial drama of El Greco's work is in the drapery that clothes his figures, with its somewhat luminous unreal color and sweeping flow of lines and folds; in such a design, the moving facial expressions become subordinate and subdued. A good example is *The Marriage of the Virgin* (*circa* 1613-14), in which the typically disproportioned figures are set against an almost trompe-l'oeil rendering of the flooring and background curtains. Such contrasts are characteristic of El Greco's compositions and can be seen in many of the works at the Met.

In looking at those works, it is worth keeping in mind something else that Albert Barnes said about El Greco's art:

> His distorted figures . . . are things in themselves and are their own aesthetic justification. To seek in them representative naturalistic values is to overlook both their intention and the total significance of art. The distortions are necessary to the design and prove that out of objects resolved into their elements an artist can produce something that moves us more than anything we find in nature.

Or, as Matisse once replied to a man who had complained that one of his paintings did not look like any woman he had ever seen, "It's not a woman, it's a painting." Similarly, in looking at El Greco's religious pictures, one feels immediately that the subject matter itself is secondary to the work of art. It was El Greco's genius to find a way of expressing ideas that were not so much philosophical and religious as aesthetic, including the idea of how best to represent the variegated shades of human feeling associated with spiritual inspiration.

TO SAY this is not inconsistent with recognizing, as Philippe de Montebello points out, that "in important respects El Greco's art belonged to the past, not the future—to the world of mannerism, with its emphasis on the artist's imagination rather than the imitation of nature." But on this very issue—that is, El Greco's rejection of Renaissance-style naturalism in favor of his own unique synthesis—the show at the Met happened to attract two revealing and remarkably hostile reviews, one in the *New York Times* by its regular art critic, Michael Kimmelman, and the other by the novelist John Updike in the *New York Review of Books*. Both men expressed disdain for El Greco and the substance of his achievement. Both did so, moreover, for essentially the same reasons.

Kimmelman was ready to concede that the portraits shown at the Met were "fresh, true to life, and understated." But that was about all. "Elsewhere," he wrote, referring to the religious pictures,

> El Greco emotes. The pitch hardly varies or drops. It's no wonder that people tend to fall in love with him when they are teenagers. His effect is mystical if you want it to be, or facile if you are a skeptic. El Greco seems to lay himself bare, each work deeply felt and individual, with an endless stream of doe-eyed saints, ecstatic and enraptured—except he churned these pictures out.

Thus dismissing the heart of El Greco's oeuvre (and of the Met show) as little more than an occasion for regressive emotional self-indulgence, Kimmelman also tells us that El Greco "is a curious case of what-if":

> [I]n Rome during an artistic lull, he left before things picked up and late mannerism turned into the baroque, the first hint of Caravaggio reaching him in Toledo only a couple of years before he died in 1614. Imagine an artist who quit Paris in 1906, went off on his own for 30 or 40 years, still thinking that the Fauves and Picasso's Blue and Rose pictures were the latest in modernism, only to see what he had missed at the end of his life, when Jackson Pollock was already around.

These speculations betray a misreading of art history; the career of André Derain, for example, one of the original Fauves, followed precisely the kind of idiosyncratic course outlined by Kimmelman, a course that arguably led Derain to produce his best work. They also reflect a seemingly conscious decision on Kimmelman's part to give no more than cursory attention to the religious pictures at the Met, which may explain why to him they all look the same. In any case, his principal objections boil down to two: first, that El Greco failed to conform to the art trends of his time; second, that he chose to spend the bulk of his energies producing paintings that took as their primary themes important figures and incidents from the Bible.

John Updike was, if anything, even more negative. "Had El Greco not invented himself," he caustically informs us, "no one like him need have existed." Like Kimmelman, Updike is annoyed by the fact that El Greco did not conform: "on the sparser cultural ground of Spain, [he] looms as a brilliant anomaly." And he is disturbed enough by this circumstance to chide the "various experts, directors, curators, and financial powers responsible for the show" for allowing their "mellifluous, mutually congratulatory speechifying" to drown "out any concern that, for the 21st-century art public, these large, lurid, hyper-Catholic canvases, with their tor-

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mented compositions and insipidly pretty, pasty faces, might reawaken the qualms of Philip II and seem *too* singular, and even repellent."

The idea that a critic for the *New York Review* should align himself with the aesthetic judgment of a 16th-century Spanish autocrat—out of concern, no less, for the moral health of visitors to the Met—is certainly remarkable. But I saw no sign of ill effects among the large crowds there, who were engaging the religious works on display with unusual and animated interest. It is really Updike himself who finds El Greco "repellent." Among the painter's other supposed failings, he identifies the "coarse and implausible shine" of his fabrics, the "forms that don't really engage him," the "tall brown heaps suggesting towers of excrement" and other "unpleasant, primitive representations," the lack of "Michelangelesque solidity," the "grotesque elongation" of his figures, his "garish colors," and so forth.

To this one can only reply that, like Kimmelman, Updike fundamentally misapprehends the painter's actual intentions and accomplishments. Anyone who seriously doubts, for example, that El Greco successfully came to terms with "Michelangesque solidity" has not looked closely at the two versions of *Pietà* on view at the Met, or at *The Holy Family* (mid-1580's). Although Updike complains that "El Greco did not have an easy time converting himself from the brittle, formal style of Eastern Christianity to the physical realism of the West," it is clear, rather, that he brought what Davies calls his own "unconventional" sensibility to bear both on the post-Byzantine style in which he was trained and on the Renaissance principles represented by Michelangelo, Rafael, Titian, and others. His evolving synthesis of elements from these traditions is unmistakable, and nowhere more so than in the four different versions of *The Purification of the Temple*, which were painted over a period of some 40 years, the first around 1570 and the last probably after 1610.

The juxtaposition of such similarly-themed works at the Met enables visitors to see the stylistic evolution to which Kimmelman and Updike seem oddly oblivious. Davies limns it succinctly:

> In spite of El Greco's achievement [in a naturalistic style], his representation of the divine in these terms did not seem to satisfy him as he grew older. The naturalistic element is gradually extracted to reveal the spiritual. Thus the decade of the 1580's is witness to a remarkable change in style. . . . Renaissance rules of perspective and proportion are gradually abandoned. It is an aesthetic not based on the observation of natural phenomena, but conceived in the mind.

El Greco, in short, aimed to transcend the example of his Renaissance predecessors, and his success in that endeavor was a result of deliberate aesthetic choices. Separating El Greco's portraits from his religious paintings, Updike and Kimmelman argue simplistically that the former, because more naturalistic, are better; in fact, there is no aesthetic discontinuity between them. Indeed, as Davies points out, El Greco's portraits themselves disclose an important stylistic shift—one that demonstrates an increasing "capacity to evoke the spirit or the motions of the mind." In his religious paintings, this capacity would reach its apotheosis.

WHAT IS behind the seemingly shared determination of two New York critics to disparage a great artist's most recognizable achievement? A large part of the answer is clearly related to the spiritual content and religious subject matter of El Greco's most famous works, which both critics treat with undeserved condescension. Updike is explicit about his personal distaste, writing at one point that "an acquaintance, a distinguished painter and caricaturist, told me that he, though an atheist, now finds himself, after this show, willing to be converted. Was my own relative lack of enthusiasm, I wondered, a product of a stubborn, hard-shell Protestantism?"

In this evidently rhetorical question, as well as in what he says elsewhere about preferring art that shows "a walking-around Jesus, a man among others," not to mention his unfortunate use of the term "hyper-Catholic," Updike appears to be reviving a mode of criticism that one thought long-abandoned. Because he does not like El Greco's subject matter, he finds El Greco's art wanting; ditto, apparently, for Michael Kimmelman. An additional irony here is that, as Davies explains, El Greco did not himself approach his chosen themes on the basis of personal belief, and his "use of light and abstracted form does not imply that he was himself a mystic, or was representing his own mystic experience."

That being so, it is all the more remarkable that, 400 years later, El Greco's art should have the power to move even an atheist in New York. Such an achievement, one would think, deserves to be appreciated, even marveled at. Yet Updike and Kimmelman are unmoved. Perhaps, then, it is not only the choice of subject matter but El Greco's very success in materializing the spiritual through his uniquely dematerialized forms that most disturbs them. What they may find truly intolerable is having to admit that such works of religious art can be, in Roger Fry's words, "not like most old pictures . . . set altogether apart from life . . . but an actual living thing"—i.e., not only truly great in themselves but actually relevant to contemporary life.

But prejudice, if that is what it is, only goes so far in explaining the reaction of the two critics. The other thing they seem to hold against El Greco is the fact that he became an exemplar for 19th- and 20th-centu-

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ry painters, including those whose accomplishments represent the highest achievements of the modern movement.

Neither Updike nor Kimmelman shows much curiosity about why artists as various as Delacroix, Sargent, Cézanne, Picasso, and Matisse (to mention only those they both cite) found El Greco so worthy of careful study. Instead, they seem to play down this fact, Updike writing dismissively of "the individuality and eccentricity that endears [El Greco] to the modern spirit," and Kimmelman relegating his art to the historical dustbin as something that "begs to be considered part of the late 16th century, not the early 21st."

This attempt to denigrate the pertinence of El Greco to the art of the modern period suggests, among other things, a simple incomprehension of the extent to which the best modernist work is itself a response to the art of the past, and was so regarded by those who made it. One need not categorize El Greco as a "proto-modernist," or remove him from his historical context, in order to recognize his continuing significance in this respect.

As for why both critics should insist that we really ought consign to the dead art of the past an artist who plainly remains very much alive for us today, perhaps the answer lies in the effects of *post*-modernism—which, as Hilton Kramer writes, is based on "a belief that the modernist era in art and culture is over and has been supplanted by something radically different." Kimmelman, as it happens, is an enthusiastic exponent of this belief: see his celebrations of such avatars of post-modernism as Matthew Barney (whose campy, cross-dressing, Vaseline-covered antics were on display at the Guggenheim not long ago) and his attempt to elevate their "achievements" over those of the modernists who preceded them. Updike, for his part, seems enamored of a proud and homey philistinism toward which the current post-modern climate is by no means inhospitable.

Could it be that, in seeking to demean El Greco, our two critics are ultimately seeking to demean modernism itself? Their strictures, at any rate, are both churlish and misplaced, and should deter no one from appreciating one of the great aesthetic experiences of the current season.

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MUSIC

King of the Jazz Age

Terry Teachout

IN 1930, Paul Whiteman, then the most popular dance bandleader in America, appeared with his 28-piece orchestra in a Hollywood musical called *King of Jazz*. The title of the film was also Whiteman's "official" nickname, coined in 1924 by a publicist. Though he is said to have been uncomfortable with the name, he never tried to suppress it, and it stuck with him to the end of his life (he died in 1967) and beyond.

By then, the notion that Whiteman was ever the "king of jazz" had long since been refuted by critics who had no use for what one of them, Gary Giddins, has termed "the damp rhythms and minimal improvisation" of Whiteman's "concert ballroom music." Never mind that Whiteman had written himself into the history of American modernism by commissioning George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* in 1924, or that his band in the late 20's featured such indisputably authentic jazz instrumentalists as Bix Beiderbecke, Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey, Eddie Lang, Red Nichols, and Frank Trumbauer (not to mention Bing Crosby, who at the time was for all purposes a jazz singer). True, but irrelevant—at least to those who saw Whiteman's commercial success as an insult to the jazzmen whom he employed and admired.

As early as the 40's, criticism of Whiteman and his "symphonic jazz" (as it came to be known) began to take on a racial tinge, and even today some writers continue to make jokes about his surname. More seriously, it is widely assumed that the success of the Whiteman band came at the expense of worthier black groups. (To be sure, Whiteman's orchestra, like every other American dance band of the 20's and early 30's, was racially segregated, though he employed such noted black arrangers as Don Redman and William Grant Still and recorded their work.) Even some who freely acknowledge the significance of the great white musicians of the period are nonetheless reluctant to give Whiteman his due.

Perhaps the most puzzling example of anti-Whiteman bias has arisen out of his relationship with the cornetist Bix Beiderbecke, after Louis Armstrong the most influential jazz musician of the 20's and 30's. Beiderbecke played with Whiteman's band from 1927 to 1929, recording some 40-odd solos with the group. He never played better than on these recordings, and he was both excited and stimulated by the challenge of fitting his harmonically advanced style into the similarly advanced contexts created by Whiteman's arrangers. Yet Beiderbecke's liking for Whiteman's music was never accepted by many admirers of the cornetist, including one so perceptive as the poet and jazz connoisseur Philip Larkin:

> [T]o hear him explode like Judgment Day out of the Whiteman Orchestra . . . only to retire at the end of sixteen bars into his genteel surroundings like a clock-cuckoo is an exhibition of artistic impotence painful to witness. Bix should have been dominating his own group, not decorating the Whiteman cake.

Not until 1968 did Whiteman begin, tentatively, to receive serious critical attention. In that year, Gun-

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ther Schuller published *Early Jazz: Its Roots and Musical Development*, the first full-length study in which a trained musician would analyze in detail the technical workings of pre-1930 jazz. Significantly, *Early Jazz* contained a 35-line footnote in which Schuller describes the Whiteman band as "an orchestra that was overflowing with excellent musicians and virtuoso instrumentalists" and whose arrangements were "marvels of orchestrational ingenuity."

This departure from conventional wisdom was followed by equally thoroughgoing reappraisals by Richard M. Sudhalter, who wrote perceptively about Whiteman in *Bix: Man and Legend* (1974, with Philip R. Evans and William Dean-Myatt) and *Lost Chords: White Musicians and Their Contribution to Jazz, 1915-1945* (1999), and William H. Youngren, whose series of groundbreaking essays about Whiteman began to appear in 1976. Sudhalter also organized a "revival" band, the New Paul Whiteman Orchestra, which performed and recorded the Whiteman band's original orchestrations.

And now Don Rayno has published the first installment of a massive two-volume monograph, *Paul Whiteman: Pioneer in American Music, Vol. 1, 1890-1930.*[1] The book contains a narrative history of Whiteman and his band, a day-by-day chronology, and a comprehensive discography, including a list of all currently available CD reissues of Whiteman's recordings. Though Rayno writes in the homemade prose style and with the uncritical enthusiasm of the hobbyist, there is nothing amateurish about his meticulous scholarship, and the facts he has so painstakingly assembled have cleared the way for a fully informed reconsideration of Whiteman's place in American music.

Paul Whiteman was born in 1890 in Denver, Colorado, the second child of Wilberforce Whiteman, a European-trained choral director who organized and directed the music program in Denver's public-school system. Paul started playing violin at the age of seven (he later switched to viola), and his father, who disliked popular music, clearly expected him to pursue a career as a member of an orchestra. In due course, he played in the Denver and San Francisco Symphonies, but he also worked regularly with pit orchestras and dance bands. Unlike his father, he took a keen interest in the new musical style known as "ragtime."

In 1917, Whiteman, then living in San Francisco, heard jazz for the first time. He found it raw but intriguing:

> I liked it, though it puzzled me. Even then it seemed to me to have vitality, sincerity, and truth in it. In spite of its uncouthness, it was trying to say something peculiarly American, just as an uneducated man struggles ungrammatically to express a true and original idea.

By then he had lost interest in orchestral work, and longed to start a dance band of his own. At that time, jazz was usually performed by small groups whose simple "arrangements" were worked out by ear and then committed to memory. (The Original Dixieland Jazz Band, which made the first jazz recordings in 1917, consisted of clarinet, trumpet, trombone, piano, and drums.) It was Whiteman's idea to create a more formalized version of jazz, to be played from written-out scores by a larger ensemble. He was, however, neither a jazz musician nor an arranger, and it was not until 1920 that he found a collaborator who could help him realize his vision.

Ferde Grofé (1892-1972), now best remembered for his *Grand Canyon Suite* (1931), was a classically trained pianist and arranger who, like Whiteman, had worked with both symphony orchestras and dance bands. He moved to San Francisco in 1919, where he met and joined forces with Whiteman, who by then was leading a nine-piece band. It was Grofé who worked out the ensemble style that became central to Whiteman's musical identity, and who arranged the best-selling 1920 recordings of "The Japanese Sandman" and "Whispering" that made Whiteman and his band famous.

The Whiteman-Grofé sound of the early 20's is now so dated that it is hard to grasp how innovative it was. Essentially, the two men were trying to create a popular-music counterpart to such "light-classic" ensembles as the dance orchestras of the Strauss family and the concert band led by John Philip Sousa. These groups had deliberately blurred the distinction between classical and nonclassical music. The Whiteman band did much the same thing, playing waltzes ("Three O'clock in the Morning") and semiclassical miniatures ("Parade of the Wooden Soldiers") along with the popular songs that were its customary fare. Most were lightly flavored with elements of jazz and ragtime, and all were played from fully scored arrangements by Grofé that made room for occasional improvised solos.[2]

Today, Whiteman's earliest recordings sound over-polite and rhythmically stiff—but so did most other "jazz" on record in 1920, and for some years afterward. (It was not until 1925 that Louis Armstrong made his first recordings as a solo artist.) For most Americans, unaware of more musically adventurous developments taking place outside the recording studios, Paul Whiteman's music *was* jazz, the music that socially aware novelists like F. Scott Fitzgerald and John O'Hara

[1] Scarecrow Press, 773 pp. $49.95.

[2] *The King of Jazz* (ASV Living Era CD AJA 5170) and *Say It With Music* (CD AJA 5291) contain a representative cross-section of early Whiteman recordings, including "The Japanese Sandman," "Three O'clock in the Morning," "Parade of the Wooden Soldiers," and "Whispering." These CD's, as well as the others mentioned below, can be purchased online by viewing this article during the month of December on Commentary's website, www.commentarymagazine.com.

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had in mind when they wrote about the manners and morals of what came to be known as "the Jazz Age."[3]

In addition, Whiteman's music, for all its undeniable limitations, exercised a huge influence on other popular musicians, white and black alike. They saw in his orchestra a model for a new kind of large-group dance music, one that (in the words of Richard Sudhalter) "to some degree captured the loose intensity of a small improvising ensemble" while simultaneously offering wider expressive possibilities than those of the semi-improvised small-band jazz of the early 20's.

IN SPEAKING about his band, Whiteman left no doubt as to what he and Grofé were trying to do:

> Lots of good musicians refuse to play dance music. I think their attitude is unsound. They should help to *elevate* it [emphasis added]. The modern jazz can be played without so much roughness and made quite attractive. That's what I aim to do.

These remarks show that Whiteman initially saw jazz not as a finished product but as the raw material for the more polished and "elevated" American concert music he sought to create. To this end, he presented "An Experiment in Modern Music," a 1924 concert at New York's Aeolian Hall in which he performed works that showed off the various sections and styles of his band. By then the ensemble had grown to 23 pieces, including eight violins—far larger than any comparable American popular-music group.

According to the program, the purpose of Whiteman's "experiment" was

> to point out . . . the tremendous strides which have been made in popular music from the day of discordant Jazz, which sprang into existence about ten years ago from nowhere in particular to the really melodious music of today, which—for no good reason—is still called Jazz.

Accordingly, the band played only one "real" jazz number, "Livery Stable Blues," first recorded by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band. The remainder of the program consisted of concert pieces, including a pair of sharply contrasting large-scale works commissioned by Whiteman that demonstrated the remarkable stylistic range of his orchestra. Victor Herbert, a classical composer now mainly remembered for such operettas as *Naughty Marietta* (1910), contributed *A Suite of Serenades*, a beautifully scored set of light-classical genre pieces with no jazz content, while George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* was a loosely knit piano concerto (orchestrated by Grofé) that made highly stylized use of devices drawn from jazz and American popular song.[4]

Both works were enthusiastically received, but it was *Rhapsody in Blue* that left a permanent mark on American music, as well as on the Whiteman band. In 1926, Whiteman started hiring well-known jazz instrumentalists, along with jazz-conscious arrangers who could write for the band in such a way as to integrate their adventurous playing into its existing style. That he was willing to do this is all the more impressive in light of the fact that "pure" jazz was not easily marketable in the late 20's. As one Whiteman sideman recalled:

> If you got yourself a jazz band, you would starve. That was the story of the music business—jazz was always hard to sell. Only Paul's great power and prestige could put jazz over commercially in those days.

Be that as it may, the Whiteman orchestra was soon playing a kind of music that did more than merely flirt with jazz. Whiteman still programmed the waltzes and light classics that had always been central to his band's appeal, and he also continued to commission and perform works in the "symphonic-jazz" idiom of *Rhapsody in Blue*. But he also featured Bix Beiderbecke and the saxophonist Frank Trumbauer in popular songs arranged by Bill Challis, Matty Malneck, and Tom Satterfield, all of whom were encouraged to use the band in whatever ways they saw fit.

The result was a series of lightly swinging performances in which the forward-looking solos of Beiderbecke and Trumbauer (and the equally creative singing of Bing Crosby) were displayed to imaginative and sophisticated effect. Not only did Challis, Malneck, and Satterfield draw wonderfully varied colors out of Whiteman's celebrated saxophone section, all six of whose members "doubled" on numerous other wind instruments, but they made no less resourceful use of the orchestra's eight violinists. If such Whiteman recordings as "Changes," "Dardanella," "From Monday On," "'Tain't So, Honey, 'Tain't So," "There Ain't No Sweet Man That's Worth the Salt of My Tears," and "You Took Advantage of Me" are not so much jazz as jazzy, they are nonetheless wholly delightful period pieces played with an engaging blend of polish and warmth, and they retain their musical interest to this day.[5]

[3] Here is a typical passage from O'Hara's *Appointment in Samarra*, published in 1934 but set in 1930: "'I think, if you don't mind, I think we shall play a little tune,' he said aloud. He played Paul Whiteman's record of [George Gershwin's] 'Stairway to Paradise,' and when the record came to the 'patter' he was screaming with jazz."

[4] The original 1924 recording of *Rhapsody in Blue* with Gershwin at the piano is on *Historic Gershwin Recordings* (RCA Victor Red Seal 09026-63276-2, two CD's). *Music for Moderns* contains nine concert pieces from 1927 and 1928, including *A Suite of Serenades* and the 1927 remake of *Rhapsody in Blue*, remastered from 78's in heavily filtered sound (Naxos Nostalgia 8.120505). *Paul Whiteman: Original 1927 Recordings*, brilliantly remastered by John R.T. Davies, gives a better idea of what the band sounded like in person (Nostalgia Arts NOCD 3006).

[5] All of the Whiteman recordings on which Beiderbecke solos (many of them also featuring Trumbauer and Crosby) are on *Bix Beiderbecke with Paul Whiteman, Vols. 1 and 2* (Classics 1208 and 1235).

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With the coming of the Great Depression, Whiteman was no longer able to afford his orchestra's huge payroll. In 1930 he cut it back to seventeen musicians, in the process diminishing (though never entirely eliminating) the jazz element that had made its most recent recordings so memorable. Though he continued to lead a band well into the 40's, he would never again be as popular as he was at the height of the Jazz Age, and with the arrival of the swing era his music came increasingly to be viewed as old-fashioned.

Still, his influence would continue to be felt in American popular music, albeit indirectly, for many years to come. Not only was the vocabulary of all subsequent big-band arrangers based on Ferde Grofé's original innovations, but, starting in the 40's, a number of prominent bandleaders, including the Whiteman alumnus Tommy Dorsey, Harry James, Glenn Miller (in the band he organized for the Army Air Force), and Artie Shaw, added string sections to the then-standard lineup of brass-saxophones-rhythm, thereby creating quasi-symphonic, popular-music ensembles modeled on Whiteman's late-20's orchestra.

As for the retrospective criticism of Whiteman's nickname and its implications, Don Rayno has given what ought to be the last word:

> For most of the public, largely unfamiliar with jazz, Whiteman provided at least an introduction to jazz-oriented music. His was not a jazz band in the purest sense, nor did he ever claim that it was. Whiteman's repertoire encompassed a much broader scope of music, which included jazz, as well as classical, popular, folk, novelty, and theatrical themes.

Now that jazz is widely seen as America's most original contribution to musical modernism, many critics seem inclined to suppose that the quality of other kinds of popular music can be judged by the closeness of their resemblance to it. This, no doubt, accounts for the unsympathetic way in which Whiteman's music has been described by critics like Gary Giddins and Philip Larkin. Yet jazz, as Rayno suggests, is not an absolute value; rather, it is but one among many worthy varieties of modern American music. Instead of expecting Whiteman's recordings to sound like "real jazz," one would do better to take them for what they are, much as Gunther Schuller did in 1968:

> There is in the best Whiteman performances a feeling and a personal sound as unique in its way as Ellington's or Basie's. It was just not based on a jazz conception. For this we cannot automatically condemn it. At their best, Whiteman's musicians played with a richness and bounce that has its own validity. . . . Excellent intonation, perfect balances, and clean attacks do not necessarily equate with superficiality.

Indeed they do not. Anyone who resists the "richness and bounce" of Whiteman's exquisitely well-crafted recordings of the late 1920's, merely because they do not sound like Duke Ellington or Count Basie (or like Bix Beiderbecke's small-group 78's), is depriving himself of an experience both pleasurable and historically illuminating. Paul Whiteman was no king of jazz, but he was, without doubt, king of the Jazz Age—and worthy of the title.

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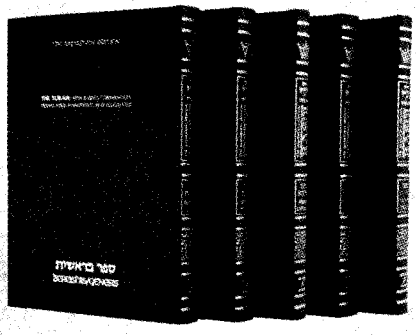

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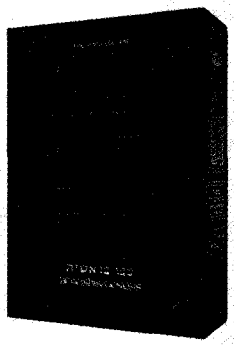

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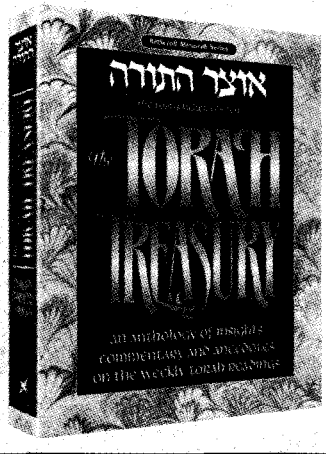

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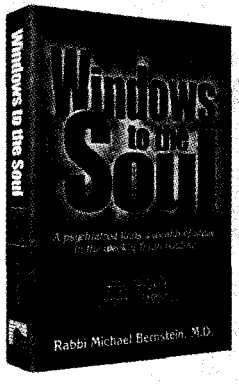

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Books in Review

A Lost Breed

Rumsfeld:
A Personal Portrait
by Midge Decter

Regan Books/HarperCollins. 220 pp. $24.95

Reviewed by
Victor Davis Hanson

Donald Rumsfeld, we are told, had a bad summer and a worse fall. Reporters tried his patience in a testy press conference by implying that the Secretary of Defense had lost operational control of the Iraqi reconstruction effort to a special working group run out of the White House by Condoleezza Rice. A leaked confidential memo by Rumsfeld to his subordinates was said to prove he was harboring more worries about post-bellum Iraq and the war against terrorism than he had publicly let on. General Wesley Clark, aspiring to the presidency, directed a barrage of criticism at the Secretary, aiming particularly at his alleged failure to assess the military situation properly and to deploy more than 140,000 troops in Iraq. Press and politicians alike were going after him for purported sins of commission as they would never think to do with, say, the diplomatic Colin Powell, whose long public record of error and hesitation—about striking back in Lebanon in 1983, about recovering Kuwait by force or going to Baghdad in 1991, about bombing Slobodan Milosevic, about removing the Taliban, about invading Iraq in 2003—has been mostly forgiven.

Midge Decter finished her brief book before this cascade of anti-Rumsfeld invective, in the heady days right after the three-week victory in Iraq last spring, when 71 percent of Americans (according to one poll) approved of his performance. Yet I doubt whether she would—or should—change anything about her positive portrait of this extraordinary public official, whose record and whose character remain mostly immune to the passing pique of Democratic hopefuls and the Washington press corps. To the contrary, to read her vivid and compelling account is to become worried in a different sense: the last thing Americans should wish is to drive from office the most gifted and successful Secretary of Defense in our nation's history.

Consider: in little more than two years after the murder of 3,000 Americans on September 11, 2001, the United States military under Rumsfeld's direction has won two wars, overthrown the Taliban and Saddam Hussein, inaugurated consensual government for 50 million Middle Easterners, scattered al-Qaeda terrorists, put both allies and enemies on notice that the entire way the United States uses its military is now under review, and crafted a new, lighter, and more mobile style of fighting—all without suffering another catastrophic attack on our territory and at the cost of about 300 soldiers lost. What Decter's biography reminds us is that we need this seventy-one-year-old veteran far more than he needs us.

The Greeks invented the art of biography as an exercise in moral philosophy. The lives of "preeminent" statesmen and generals were to serve as ethical exemplars—both good and bad—for the rest of us, subject as we

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are to the same all-too-human appetites and temptations. Thus, the early years of an Alcibiades, an Alexander, or a Cicero were mined by Plutarch for anecdotes that might reveal an unchanging and essential character, its elements becoming more manifest during the crucible of adulthood and thereby accounting for the subject's ultimate achievement. It is this biographical tradition—not the current American bathos of fact-filled, gossip-ridden megabooks about celebrities—that Midge Decter has returned to in her succinct essay on our current Secretary of Defense.

Two grand themes predominate in her narrative. First, an examination of Donald Rumsfeld's earlier life and political career allows us to make perfect sense of his sometimes contentious tenure since September 11—that is, to see it as simply a continuance of a long if occasionally controversial record of public service. For anyone curious about Rumsfeld's propensity to be impulsive, blunt, and often at odds with protocol (remember his reference to "Old Europe," or his comparison of the anti-Americanism of a German government with that of regimes like Libya), Decter explains that it was always so. She shows us the young Congressman on his way home in 1963, joining police in hot pursuit to tackle a fugitive criminal; the middle-aged ambassador to NATO running with the bulls in Pamplona; the corporate mogul of the Searle Pharmaceutical Company calling Monsanto's bluff in the eleventh hour of a proposed buy-out and thereby garnering for his shareholders a $2.7 billion prize, and several millions for himself.

After September 11, a steady and unfazed Donald Rumsfeld mesmerized the nation in a series of weekly and even twice-weekly press conferences, during which, speaking without notes, he offered sweeping ad-hoc assessments on critical topics as wide-ranging as the nature of terror, the readiness of the U.S. military, and America's relationship with both enemies in the Middle East and allies in Europe. Just as character remains constant from youth to adulthood, so too, it seems, does the accumulated experience of a long public life explain the mature expertise applied by Rumsfeld to the war against terror.

Donald Rumsfeld was once, during the Ford administration, the country's youngest Secretary of Defense; 26 years later, he is the only American to have held the office twice. Not much that goes on in the Pentagon is new to him. ("A friend in Washington, D.C. is someone who stabs you in the chest," is one of his maxims.) He was once Dick Cheney's boss; he navigated the landmines of the dying Nixon administration; he worked with Henry Kissinger and Daniel P. Moynihan, ran the Office of Economic Opportunity, served as the United States ambassador to NATO, and ran afoul of George Bush, Sr. This was in addition to directing some of the largest companies in the United States, piloting jet planes, and, in 1987, running unsuccessfully for the presidency of the United States.

Not even the September 11 terror attack on the building he was working in posed a novel threat. As Middle East envoy under Ronald Reagan, Rumsfeld had met most of the region's thugs and dictators. He had been asked to preside over some of our country's less than inspiring moments—explaining to shocked Lebanese the abrupt flight of the U.S. Marine contingent after the October 23, 1983 bombing of the Beirut barracks; defending an opportunistic policy of American neutrality during Saddam Hussein's war against the mullahs in Iran.

As Decter points out, our current policy linking terrorism—which, after all, is merely a method, not an enemy *per se*—to real governments reflects Rumsfeld's carefully acquired past understanding of how such killers work. As early as 1987, he was warning in public speeches that the United States could not stop terrorist attacks against its citizens "until it redefines the process as warfare by hostile governments rather than isolated acts." To anyone curious about who is the driving force behind the idea of taking the war to regimes that abet terrorism while at the same time hunting down the miscreants themselves, the answer is Rumsfeld.

DECTER'S SECOND theme is that the life of this Illinois native is emblematic of a long but now largely forgotten American tradition, grounded in the pragmatism of the Midwest, in which allegiance to family, to country, and to a code of moral behavior is seen as not only essential to the health of society but "manly"—i.e., virtuous—in its own right. In this regard, Decter also argues that there is a lofty sort of male sexiness inherent in the septuagenarian Rumsfeld—how else to account for his sudden popularity last spring with women of all ages? And she contrasts this noble sexiness directly with . . . well, you know whom:

> The point is that by the time [Bill Clinton] departed the White House there were few women and even fewer men who would with any sincerity have awarded [him] the status of sex hero, let alone—O happy invention!—"studmuffin." That designation would have to await the arrival of a high-achieving, clear-headed, earnest, no-nonsense, Midwestern family man nearly seventy years old.

Decter makes much of Rumsfeld's personal moderation; he seems immune to the classical excesses of drink, drugs, gambling, and cavorting. And here is an interesting paradox, for it is precisely this impeccably conservative personal life that seems so at odds with—or does it perhaps best explain?—his often radical approach to public affairs and his unswerving and quite public self-assurance. He does not much seem to care what people say or think about him as long as he is acting on the truth as he sees it. That millions of Americans appreciate this simplicity and steadfastness implies to Decter a hopeful shift in public

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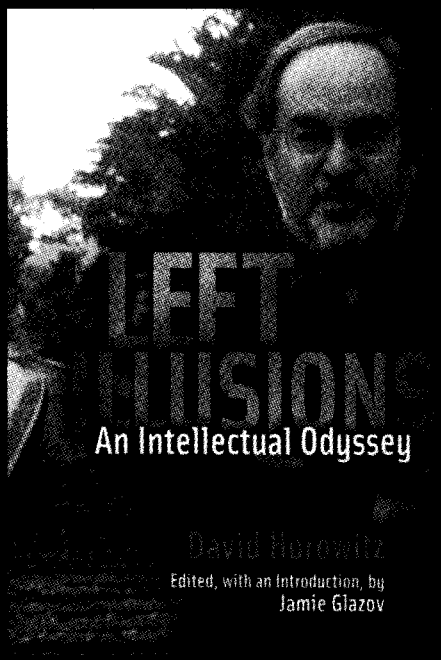

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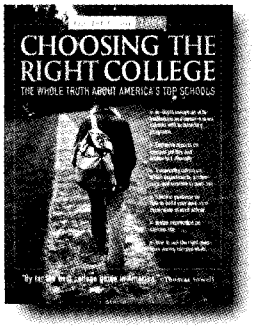

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mores, or at least a healthy nostalgia for men of an old and lost breed:

> The popular discovery of Donald Rumsfeld spells the return of the ideal of the American family man, with all that such an ideal entails in the way of vitality, determination, humor, seriousness, and abiding self-confidence, along with protectiveness of loved ones, neighbors, and country. In the long run, this change may well be more important to the fortunes of his country than the changes he wrought in the armed forces.

Rumsfeld is not the last word on the Secretary of Defense, and it makes no apologies for its enthusiastic applause for both the man and his career. Others will write more—and more negatively. But at a time when American biography has too often assumed the form of big books about little people, books in which thousands of irrelevant footnoted facts vie with raw gossip as substitutes for thought and analysis, Midge Decter's life marks as refreshing a change as does Donald Rumsfeld himself.

The Good Fight

Right to Exist:
A Moral Defense of
Israel's Wars
by Yaacov Lozowick
Doubleday. 304 pp. $26.00

Reviewed by
Christopher Caldwell

IN APRIL 2002, Yaacov Lozowick, the director of archives at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, was to appear at a public ceremony where an aged Israeli woman would make a gift of the letters she had received as a teenager from her mother, who had been trapped in Europe and died at Auschwitz. The woman did not show up. Her grandson, a soldier, had been killed that morning in the West Bank city of Jenin during an Israeli counterattack on the terrorist cells that had lately murdered 29 people at a Passover seder in Netanya.

As the battle in Jenin ended, synagogues were being firebombed in France, European intellectuals were accusing the Israel Defense Forces of "genocidal" counterterrorist tactics, and the United Nations was setting up an inquiry into war crimes committed by—Israel. When Lozowick visited the mourning grandmother a few days later, he recalls, "She asked me if she was losing her grip on reality or was it the world? I assured her it was the world."

Lozowick wrote *Right to Exist* partly to rally compatriots like this grandmother. But mainly he wants to give an accounting to "the world"—to the demonstrators and the headline writers who incessantly question Israel's morality no matter how ferocious or frequent the attacks against it and no matter how measured its response. Many Israelis might well look on Lozowick's project—to prove that "Zionism has mostly tried to be moral"—as defensive, foolish, even pathetic. But Lozowick, who was himself active for decades in Israel's peace movement, has a passion for rational argument, and a faith that it can (at certain rare moments) change the minds of even the most hardened adversaries.

Lozowick's own mind has changed. The collapse of the Oslo peace process, which he had backed from its inception in 1993, made him despair of Palestinian good will. Western indifference toward (or, worse, sympathy for) the terror campaign mounted against Israel since September 2000 led him to a public reassessment of his earlier views, starting in this magazine ("A Jerusalem Diary," May 2001). Even today he remains unstintingly critical of certain Israeli military excesses over the decades—in Kibiya in 1953 ("clearly a war crime"), Kfar Kassem in 1956 ("murders"), and Lebanon, where he served, in 1982 (a "moral catastrophe"). But after years of viewing Ariel Sharon as the living symbol of Israeli military hubris, of the "transformation of weak but moral Jews into immoral power users," he now wishes to explain to non-Israeli readers why he ended up voting for him.

LOZOWICK TREATS Israel's clashes with its Arab neighbors in straightforward chronological order, starting with proto-Zionist settlements of the 19th century and culminating with the suicide-bombing campaigns of the last three years. His goal is not to rehearse an old story but to highlight paradoxes and poorly remembered incidents that clarify Israel's current predicament.

He dwells, for example, on the 1929 massacre at Hebron, in which local Arabs killed a tenth of the centuries-old Jewish community. The victims were not Zionist newcomers, and Israel was not yet a state. Therefore, Lozowick concludes, there must have been some significant tradition of anti-Semitic violence in Palestine that existed independently of the Jewish state, and it is reasonable to assume a relation between it and the anti-Semitism that led to the expulsion of virtually all Jews from Arab lands after 1948. In light of this history, Lozowick proceeds to address what he sees as a false argument advanced against Israel's right to exist in our own day: that, in being forced to tolerate a Jewish state on Arab land, Palestinians have been unfairly asked to pay for European misdeeds.

Similarly, in describing terrorist incidents carried out by Jews in the 1930's and 40's, Lozowick shows no indulgence for the perpetrators but

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL *is a senior editor at the* Weekly Standard. *His article, "The Fallaci Affair," appeared in our October 2002 issue.*

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insists on noting the Jewish *response* to such violence. When the Irgun bombed Arab marketplaces in 1938, it was condemned by a Jewish community that felt itself dishonored. When the Stern gang assassinated Lord Moyne, the British minister of state, in Cairo, the perpetrators were hunted down by the Hagana (then an underground Jewish militia) and were delivered to the British. Weeks after irregulars murdered villagers at Deir Yassin in 1948, David Ben-Gurion ordered an attack on the freighter *Altalena* as it arrived in Tel Aviv with arms for the Irgun. And so forth, down to the murder of Muslim worshippers in Hebron by Baruch Goldstein in 1994. Palestinian acts of terror, by contrast, as we have seen over and over again in the last years, win overwhelming support in polls of Palestinian opinion whenever Arab-Israeli tension rises.

A last example of Lozowick's method is his treatment of Israeli settlements in the West Bank territories won in the Six-Day war of 1967. The proximate cause of Israeli domestic anguish over these settlements is to be found, he thinks, in the way the next great conflict in the region, the Yom Kippur war of 1973, polarized opinion in the country. Some Israelis responded to that traumatic event, in which their unprepared and overly confident nation came to the brink of destruction, with a hardening of their Zionist determination; the most hardened gravitated to Gush Emunim, founded in 1974, which sought to settle religious-minded Jews in biblical Judea and Samaria. Others (like Lozowick himself), convinced that the Arabs were as chastened by war as the Israelis, joined various peace movements, particularly Peace Now!, founded in 1978. Both sides, in their way, were right, and it was the genius of Menachem Begin to appeal to them both: to Gush Emunim with settlements, to Peace Now! with an Egyptian peace accord. But in so

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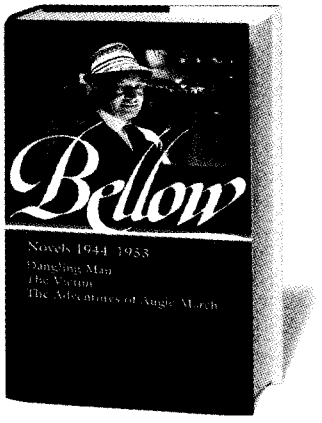

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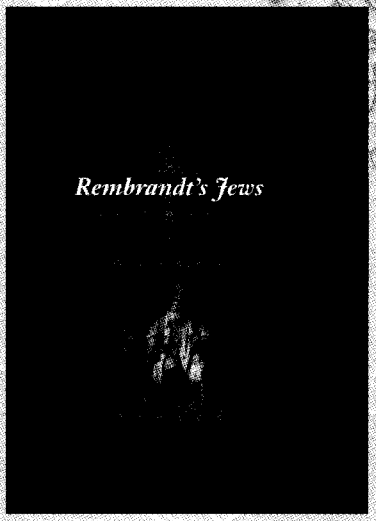

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doing, Begin institutionalized this division—and Lozowick is an interesting person to read on the matter, because the division runs right through the center of his own thinking.

On the one hand, he worries that settlements in general created a constituency "that had an interest in not testing to see whether the Arabs were changing their minds about Israel." On the other hand, he thinks Israelis can neither evacuate metropolitan Jerusalem nor divide it. But even that does not fully capture his ambivalence, whose core may be found in his earlier discussion of Israel's war of independence in 1948-49. Armistice talks, he notes there, began only after Israeli forces had entered Egyptian territory—the evident lesson being that Israel's foes tend not to negotiate for peace except as a means to stop losing ground. Although Lozowick does not draw the connection explicitly, he does assert that "the settlers, of all people, may have contributed more than anyone else" to bring Palestinians to the negotiating table after 1988.

THIS HISTORICAL background places in context Israel's—and Lozowick's own—embrace of Ariel Sharon in the wake of Oslo. Lozowick now sees the project of negotiations as "brain-dead from its very birth," and the flurry of last-minute concessions offered by Prime Minister Ehud Barak as an act of "supreme hubris." The central problem of any land-for-peace negotiations lies in the asymmetry in what is being negotiated. Land once ceded is hard to reclaim; peace can be revoked by merely changing one's mind. And bad faith—of the sort Yasir Arafat evinced again and again, most dramatically when he walked away from negotiations at Camp David and Taba in 2000 and 2001—can heighten the damage. "The pretense that the Palestinians merely wished to end the occupation in order to get on with their lives," Lozowick writes, "could be maintained only until the day an Israeli leader offered them precisely that."

It is here that Lozowick indirectly answers one of those counterarguments about Palestinian intentions that seems wholly convincing to Israel's critics. It goes like this: if the Palestinians were really acting in bad faith, would they not have *accepted* the Camp David offer, and then duplicitously used their state as a platform to win the whole of the land between the Jordan and the sea? But in fact, at the time the *intifada* started and negotiations broke down, the Palestinians already had much of their state: their governing authorities, their armed forces, much of the territory. They started the Jerusalem *intifada*, in Lozowick's view, in order to free themselves of the need to pay for that state through an end to violence. And why, in their view, should they have paid for it, since, as Lozowick says, they "came away from the agreement with strong feelings of victimhood intact"? That is, they got the largest state they could that was consistent with their determination to continue waging war.

As for Israel, it was in a far worse position than before the negotiations began, and—most important for Lozowick's purposes—it was worse off precisely because it had conducted the negotiations morally. It now had no peace, and no land left to trade for peace in the future. The key to Sharon's electoral success since then has been his "determination not to allow the Palestinians any gain whatsoever from their violence."

A THEME that runs through Lozowick's book is that Jews, not having had their own state for most of the last two millennia, have thus not had a monopoly on violence anywhere they have lived. Lozowick is far from proposing a lower standard of judgment on the grounds that Israelis, and Jews generally, are new to the game of power politics. Quite the contrary: he argues that the Jewish state is in principle reluctant to use violence as other states do. That, in stark contrast to Israel's foes, "no Jew ever walked into a Palestinian child's bedroom and intentionally killed her" ought to weigh heavily in our considerations of who is right and who is wrong in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

So Lozowick thinks; and he is right. The ability to confine itself to a bare minimum of violence in one of the most violent parts of the world is, and should be, a shining mark in Israel's favor. But whether the moral superiority of Israelis over their foes is also "the source of their strength," as Lozowick puts it, is open to debate. The moral micromanagement of Israeli violence is wholly admirable, but it has its drawbacks.

One drawback is that when Israel does commit violence, it does so after long premeditation and solemn discussion, and it takes moral responsibility for what it does. Is it not possible that Israel is resented precisely for this? In our world, limited violence for the sake of self-defense or keeping order is interrogated mercilessly, while wild, random, indiscriminate violence—barbarism—takes on an aspect of *sprezzatura*, even of glamor. The more irresponsible the violence, the more apt unprincipled people are to excuse it as a fit of justified passion. You can meet young protesters in any European plaza who believe that capital punishment for murder is a crime against humanity but that placing a bomb in a discothèque is a "cry of despair."

Perhaps Israel's very fastidiousness deprives it of credibility. Israel is fighting a battle for survival in a hostile corner of the world—but fastidiousness is not a mark of how its enemies fight battles. To take a specific instance, Lozowick still holds out hope that Israel can trade its occupied territories for peace, and adds that "the symbolic expres-

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sion of this forward-looking choice will be Israel's relinquishing of control over the second most holy place in the Jewish world, Hebron, where the Patriarchs are buried." One can commend his open-heartedness, but might not a Muslim fighting over the third most holy place in the Islamic world be emboldened by such willingness to see both sides of the issue, reasoning that any people ready to give up the tombs of its Patriarchs can eventually be bullied out of the rest of its inheritance?

Pointing out that Israel has in general fought its wars with a high concern for justice, as Lozowick does, is noble and necessary work. But let us not be surprised if Israel's very decency makes it all the less tolerable to Arab terrorists and their fellow travelers, reminding them as it most unpleasantly does of their own misdeeds and failings.

Fat and Happy?

The Progress Paradox:
How Life Gets Better
While People Feel Worse
by Gregg Easterbrook
Random House. 400 pp. $24.95

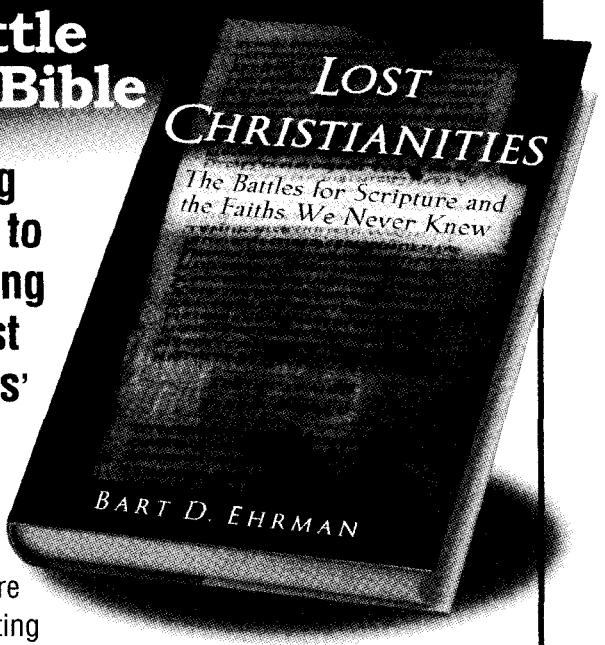
Reviewed by
Kay S. Hymowitz

Americans have never been so educated, healthy, well-fed, long-lived, or fabulously rich. In fact, by any reasonable measure, we live more comfortable, bountiful lives than 99 percent of the human beings who have ever walked the planet, including most of history's kings, emperors, and pashas. So—are we having fun yet?

The answer is no, according to Gregg Easterbrook in *The Progress Paradox*. Easterbrook, a senior edi-

Kay S. Hymowitz *is a contributing editor of the Manhattan Institute's* City Journal.

The Battle for the Bible



A fascinating introduction to an astonishing range of 'lost Christianities' that flourished at the time when the Christian movement began. Bart Ehrman has the rare gift of communicating scholarship in writing that is lively, enjoyable, and accessible."

—**Elaine Pagels,**
author of ***Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas***

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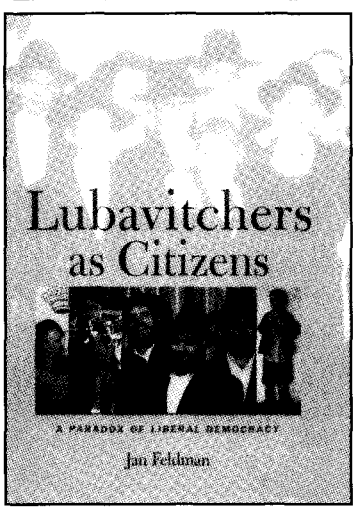

Lubavitchers as Citizens
A Paradox of Liberal Democracy
JAN FELDMAN

Lubavitchers are active in the civic life of their communities and so should be considered good citizens by advocates of participatory democracy. However, their obviously nonliberal worldview tends to elicit rancor in precisely those quarters. Many scholars treat democratic virtues and liberal values as synonymous. As a result, nonliberal groups are viewed with suspicion: if they reject liberal values, they are also seen as rejecting democratic ones. Jan Feldman focuses on a subset of Chassidic Judaism known as Lubavitch, or ChaBad, to explore this assumption. Through numerous interviews in the centers of Lubavitch life in Montreal, New York, and Washington, D.C., Jan Feldman not only illuminates a group fascinating in its own right but also provides insights into long-held assumptions about the relationship between liberal and democratic values. $32.50

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tor at the *New Republic*, has long been known for sharp, balanced commentary on everything from the environment to military hardware, from economics and politics to football. Recently, though, he earned himself a less savory reputation when, in the course of a hastily composed online condemnation of Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill*, he wondered about "Jewish [movie] executives [who] worship money above all else, by promoting for profit the adulation of violence." Easterbrook's new book does not betray the remotest sign of prejudice, but it does leave some idea of how he got himself into such a fix.

The Progress Paradox begins by exploring the astonishing improvement over the past century in the living standard of ordinary Americans. Not so long ago, the tycoon and the shoe salesman lived dramatically different lives. No longer. Today regular folks go to college, own stocks, are served by maids in fancy hotels and waiters in fancy restaurants, and—despite the steady drumbeat of reports decrying our hyperactive lives—enjoy unprecedented amounts of free time. They use their leisure for, among other things, some 25 million overseas vacations a year; as Easterbrook quips, "70 percent of the nation are members of the jet set."

The change over the last 50 years has been especially dramatic. After World War II, a returning GI believed he was fulfilling the American dream when he moved his young family into an 1,100-square-foot, one-bathroom house in Levittown. The homes occupied by his baby-boomer children are typically more than twice that size, with several bathrooms and central air-conditioning.

But does not rising inequality in incomes mar this happy picture? Not on careful inspection, Easterbrook argues. Yes, a substantial group of Americans is "stalled" at the bottom of the income scale, but this is largely a consequence of our generous immigration policies. Most new arrivals are poorly educated, and their earnings tend to be low. "Factor out immigration," Easterbrook writes, "and the rise in American inequality disappears."

The more emblematic story has to do with economic mobility, which has swelled the ranks of the upper middle class. Twenty-three percent of U.S. households now enjoy an annual income of $75,000 or more, as compared with under 1 percent (adjusted for inflation) in 1890. In 2000, 13 percent of home sales were for vacation houses and condos, where Americans could enjoy the catamarans and Grady White powerboats for which in that year alone they shelled out $25 billion—more than North Korea's GDP.

Widespread material comfort is just part of the good news. Americans today are also safer and healthier than their grandparents. Over the past generation, the nation has seen decreases in crime, gun and traffic deaths, and infant mortality, as well as in the use of drugs, cigarettes, and alcohol. Despite ominous reports on the evening news, the environment has also improved markedly. Twenty-five years ago, only one third of our lakes and rivers were clean enough for swimming and fishing; today, two thirds are. Toxic emissions are down by 51 percent since 1988.

As for the spiraling cost of health care, it is a blessing in disguise. Health care is more expensive because there is so much more that doctors can do for those who suffer: it is now taken for granted that insurance companies should pay for the artificial knees and hips that did not exist a mere 30 years ago. Perhaps the most striking sign of the success of our much-criticized medical system is that one no longer sees class-based differences in height, life span, or other measures of health—a situation almost unique in civilized history.

YET, FOR all this, Americans are mucking around in the dumps rather than dancing in the gold-paved streets. Easterbrook cites a 1996 poll showing that 66 percent of us believe "the lot of the average person is getting worse." Not only have the trend lines in surveys of happiness been flat since World War II, but the percentage of people who consider themselves "very happy" has declined and the number of those suffering from depression has increased tenfold.

Easterbrook proffers a wide variety of theories for this striking disconnection between our material and our emotional states. There is the fact, for example, that progress inevitably brings with it new problems. Automobiles, for instance, have added immeasurably to personal freedom, convenience, and productivity, but they have also given us traffic jams, pollution, road rage, rising rates of obesity, and general anomie. Further fueling our discontent is "catalogue-induced anxiety": luscious displays of $10,000 Hermès handbags or $25,000 imported faucets make mass-marketed Coach knockoffs and Kohler fixtures seem shabby. Easterbrook also turns to evolutionary science. A "yearning for love and intimacy" is part of our make-up, but many more of us now live in smaller, more atomized families. Stress, too, is natural and necessary—an element in our "survival strategy"—but the Western way of life tends to intensify it.

Easterbrook devotes the final part of his book to how we might overcome our happiness deficit. The most important tool, he believes, is "positive psychology," a therapeutic approach that rejects the pessimism of Freud and the coldness of behaviorism. It aims, in the words of one of its exponents, to help people "learn optimism." Drawing on a "new wave of forgiveness research," Easterbrook urges that, rather than nursing our grievances, we work instead to cul-

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tivate mercy and gratitude. "If positive psychology can show that when you behave in a kind way, what's in it for you is a happier life," he writes, "this will create a powerful new incentive for people to emphasize the better parts of their nature."

Easterbrook also recommends that restless American souls seek fulfillment by improving the lives of others. For all our progress, there are still serious flaws in the Western way of life, flaws that could be resolved. The lack of universal health insurance, for instance, is a continuing blight on our progress. One American in eight continues to live in poverty, a sorry state of affairs that, according to Easterbrook, could easily be fixed through "living wage" laws. Nor is he an isolationist when it comes to spreading the emotional benefits of progress; he encourages us, through the use of foreign aid, to turn our attention to "the defeat of global despair."

The Progress Paradox is best understood as two books: the first of these is an analysis of the gap between our astonishing material progress and our disappointing levels of happiness; the second is a how-to manual for closing that gap. The first book is a pleasure, filled with curious examples and illuminating insights. Although he has a mature grasp of the trade-offs that come with modern progress, Easterbrook is unafraid to rub our faces in our good fortune. We have much to be thankful for, and it is to his great credit that his own recitation of our blessings inspires some of the feelings of delight and gratitude that he rightly claims are missing from our lives.

Would that he had stopped with that humble reminder of our happy predicament. Unfortunately, Easterbrook's second book sorely overreaches, leaving a trail of assertions ranging from the commonsensical to the naive and the ham-fisted. Few would argue with his discussion of the many ways Americans have misused their bounty, but he has lit-

The history in their hearts is preserved in their words.

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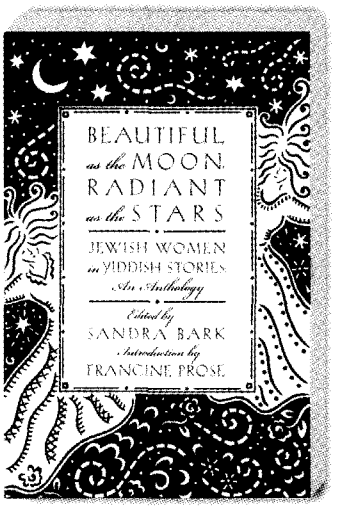
BEAUTIFUL as the MOON RADIANT as the STARS
JEWISH WOMEN in YIDDISH STORIES An Anthology
Edited by SANDRA BARK
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tle to add to an already abundant literature of complaint about consumerism and hyper-individualism.

As for the final section of *The Progress Paradox*, it touches on a deep idea, with roots in Aristotle and the writings of the American founders. Happiness, as Easterbrook reminds us, is both a personal and a social good, and is closely intertwined with the idea of virtue. But he tends to bang around these hefty notions as a fishmonger would a carp. For him, thinking happy thoughts is just the reasonable thing to do. "Meaning can be found," he assures us. "If God exists, then surely life has meaning. And if God does not exist, then surely life has meaning. Meaning may be divinely conferred. If not, we can create meaning by living decent and admirable lives."

Easterbrook is a logical, left-brain sort of guy who has blundered into the thorny fields of psychology, philosophy, and religion. Analyzing research on economics and the environment, he is as agile as they come. But when he turns to deeper questions—and here we return to the ugly statement from his online column—he is clumsily utilitarian. The writer of *The Progress Paradox* is not a man who would allude to the Jewish background of movie executives to lend support to noxious stereotypes; he is, however, an earnest, somewhat naive man, determined to do good yet deeply frustrated by the reason-defying complexity of human motivations.

It is this same blunt utilitarianism, I suspect, that leads Easterbrook to suppose that the progress paradox is in fact a paradox. Alas, it is not. Just about every serious thinker, from Plato to Shakespeare to Tolstoy, has scoffed at the notion that health and wealth bring happiness in their wake. In his conclusion, Easterbrook announces as something of a discovery what is little more than a truism: "Happiness must come from within, and money cannot buy it."

Ressentiment

Anti-Americanism
by Jean-François Revel
translated by Diarmid Cammell
Encounter. 176 pp. $25.95

Reviewed by
Jacob Heilbrunn

NO ONE has attacked the illusions of the French Left more audaciously, or persistently, than Jean-François Revel. A columnist for the newspaper *L'Express*, Revel has devoted much of his career as a political commentator to defending the United States and debunking Communism. In *Without Marx or Jesus*, published in the early 1970's, he challenged the idea, then prevalent in certain circles in France, that the Vietnam war had turned the U.S. into a fascist state; he predicted that America would soon recover and go on to lead a global economic revolution. In the 1980's, in *How Democracies Perish*, he praised Ronald Reagan and condemned the passivity of western Europe in the face of Soviet totalitarianism.

Now, in *Anti-Americanism*, a best-seller when it was published in France in 2002, Revel seeks to explain why so many Europeans view the U.S. as an evil empire. His own country, he believes, has long functioned as a kind of laboratory for these views. Drawing on political speeches, television and radio interviews, and newspaper articles, he shows how leading French intellectuals and politicians have distorted the most basic American realities in order to nurse grievances about Europe's—and their own—loss of status.

IN REVEL'S view, French anti-Americanism poses less of a peril to America than to France itself. Condemning alike the French Left and Right for their attachment to *dirigiste* economics, he inverts their shopworn arguments, suggesting that only by adopting the American model of capitalism can France recover its former greatness. Indeed, as Revel sees it, anti-Americanism is nothing more than a stalking horse for those in Europe (and the third world) who reject economic globalization.

After September 11, millions of Europeans turned out for rallies to honor the memory of the thousands killed in the assaults on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, but it was America-as-victim that appealed to them. The sympathy quickly ebbed. As Revel reminds us, it took only a few days for the European press, led by the French, to publish crackpot theories about American culpability for the attacks.

When the U.S. fought back by bombing Afghanistan, 113 French intellectuals launched an appeal decrying this "imperial crusade." By early 2002, Thierry Meyssan, in his best-seller *The Awful Fraud* (*L'Effroyable Imposture*), was claiming that no airplane had crashed into the Pentagon on September 11. Rather, the American secret services had set off a truck bomb so that President Bush could justify attacking first Afghanistan, then Iraq. The Left, Revel writes, could not bring itself to "renounce its demonized image of the United States, an image that it needs all the more since socialism has ended in shipwreck. . . . Woe upon those who would deprive them of the convenient Lucifer that is their last ideological lifeline."

In judging the U.S., the French also routinely employ a double standard. Like other Europeans, Revel argues, they blame America for its supposed military adventurism but elide their own role in creating geopolitical messes, whether in the former Yugoslavia or in former colonies in the Middle East and Africa. At the very moment that France was invading the Ivory Coast without the sanction of the United

JACOB HEILBRUNN, *a member of the editorial board of the* Los Angeles Times, *is working on a book about neoconservatism.*

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Nations, it was denouncing the Bush administration as it sought the world's approval for deposing Saddam Hussein.

In much the same way, the French press condemns American-style capitalism for supposedly impoverishing workers and the middle class, but refuses to acknowledge the dead hand of the French welfare state and regulatory system. Even as unemployment in France climbed to over 9 percent in September 2001, *Le Monde* was publishing an article titled "The End of the American Economic Dream." If, as French elites insist, "American civilization is nothing but an accumulation of economic, political, social, and cultural calamities," Revel asks, "how is it that the rest of the world is so worried about America's wealth, scientific and technological preeminence, and cultural ubiquity?"

Entranced by memories of past grandeur, French socialists believe, according to Revel, that their country can replace the U.S. as a world leader by challenging globalization. As former foreign minister Hubert Vedrine would have it, "Now that the threat of an excessive homogenization is looming, France again has a good hand to play." What they overlook, Revel points out, is that the third world has been impoverished not by the global market but by state socialism. No amount of U.S. aid or debt forgiveness can overcome the criminal mismanagement of oligarchs like Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe.

But a rational assessment of the pluses and minuses of American power is hardly what French politicians and intellectuals wish to disseminate. As Revel writes, "The principal function of anti-Americanism has always been, and still is, to discredit liberalism [i.e., capitalism and free trade] by discrediting its supreme incarnation." To this end, the French public is provided with a picture of America as a den of iniquity, where limousines glide past famished indigents, Muslims are pursued by an implacable secret police, only the rich have health care, and the President, a naive religious fanatic, is controlled by oil companies.

No less distorted is the portrait of American foreign policy. As far as Revel is concerned, it is the leaders of Europe, not George W. Bush, who must shoulder any blame for a unilateralist American foreign policy. Americans, he asserts, have become accustomed to reflexive European opposition, prompting them to dispense altogether with consultations. Stuck in cold-war thinking, European capitals denounced the Bush administration's decision to withdraw from the ABM treaty and refused to recognize that treaties alone cannot stop the accumulation by dictators of chemical, biological, and nuclear arsenals. "Europeans' voluntary blindness with regard to these radical changes," Revel concludes, "renders any American attempts at dialogue fruitless; as a result, America has no other option but to make unilateral decisions."

Revel has written a fascinating, impassioned, and largely persuasive account of the ills that afflict the French intelligentsia, and in doing so has performed a vital service. With the exception of such generally sober thinkers as Bernard-Henri Lévy and André Glucksmann, he has been virtually alone in protesting both the reluctance of French intellectuals to face up to their Communist past and their unwillingness to acknowledge the Islamic threat.

In his eagerness to defend the U.S., however, Revel runs the risk at times of becoming a mirror-image of his opponents. As he sees it, it is French, not American, democracy that is open to a charge of degeneracy. It is the French who are saddled with a moribund constitution, a government that only knows how to tax and spend and is incapable of upholding the law, "an

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intelligentsia that is ever blinder to the world," and "citizens who grow ever idler, convinced that they can always earn more while doing less."

Is France really in such bad shape? Revel's criticisms are so categorical that they lead one to wonder whether he is not offering as great a caricature of his own country as his foes draw of America. Similarly, his portrait of the U.S. is so flattering, so lacking in even the smallest shortcomings, that it may cause the most ardent America-booster to blush. I suspect that if Revel really thought France was so hopeless, he would not be troubling to confront his countrymen with a rosy picture of the American alternative.

Dismissing anti-Americanism as a neurotic obsession, as Revel does, also runs the risk of making Europe's attempt to emancipate itself from the U.S. seem more trivial than it is. Germany's Gerhard Schroeder was not suffering from an inferiority complex when, during his own bid for reelection, he lashed out at President Bush; he was making a shrewd political calculation that would advance his own interests. Similarly, French President Jacques Chirac skillfully maneuvered to strip Bush and Tony Blair of much international legitimacy for the war in Iraq by constructing an opposition bloc made up of China, Russia, and Germany. The danger is that Europe, far from becoming an economic basket-case and suffering a nervous breakdown, will pose a real obstacle to American foreign-policy aims in coming decades. Countering that prospect will require a strategy based on more than psychoanalysis, however brilliant.

Still, Revel has provided a telling inventory of the more malign impulses emanating from France. A country that has exported not only miniskirts but the Ayatollah Khomeini has a lot to answer for. In his new book, Revel has begun the reckoning.

Survival Is Not Enough

Vixi:
Memoirs of a Non-Belonger
by Richard Pipes
Yale. 255 pp. $30.00

Reviewed by
Mark Falcoff

READERS OF COMMENTARY will immediately identify Richard Pipes as the distinguished historian of Russia and a prominent public intellectual. Few, however, are likely to know much about his background or the details of his extraordinary life, here recounted with energy and candor. From the very first chapter, with its enthralling account of the circumstances surrounding his family's escape from the Nazi authorities in Poland on the eve of World War II, through the subsequent narrative of his military service, his education in the Midwest and at Harvard, and his rise to eminence as a major force in Russian studies and as a critic and sometime participant in the making of U.S. foreign policy, the story of Pipes's career offers a powerful reminder that truth is as curious as fiction. The Latin title is apt: *Vixi*, "I have lived."

Richard Pipes was born in Polish Silesia in 1921, the son of an assimilated, upper-middle-class Jewish family with international business connections. His father had spent his youth in Vienna, and in the Pipes home Polish and German were spoken interchangeably. More significantly, the elder Pipes had fought in the Polish Legion during World War I, establishing friendships with many who would assume the leadership of the postwar Polish republic. These contacts would prove essential to the survival of his family later on.

In the Poland in which Richard Pipes grew up, Polishness was inseparably linked to Roman Catholicism, thereby effectively excluding Jews and Orthodox Christians from membership in the national community. Nevertheless, he recalls no overt discrimination against Jews (except in the military and diplomatic service) and no persecution. "The majority of Orthodox Jews lived, of their own choice, in compact communities," he writes. As for assimilated Jews, "such as we were," these lived "in an in-between world, but I must say that I felt more in common with educated Poles than with Orthodox Jews who treated the likes of us as apostates."

This relatively benign arrangement came to an abrupt end with the death in 1935 of Marshal Pilsudski, founder of the modern Polish state. After that, the position of Jews became increasingly precarious, and positively life-threatening with the German invasion in 1939. How the Pipes family managed to escape is a story too complicated to relate here, but it involved the intervention of Polish diplomats, friends of his father, who facilitated their transit through Germany and then Italy, where the family obtained visas to the United States. They left Europe in the nick of time; the day after their departure, the Italian police came to apprehend them. The family docked in Hoboken, New Jersey on July 11, 1940—Richard's seventeenth birthday.

There followed a brief student period at Muskingum College in Ohio, interrupted by Pearl Harbor and Pipes's entry into the Army Air Corps. Because of his language skills, he was selected for a special program to learn Russian and spent much of the rest of the war at Cornell, whose campus had been taken over for the preparation of intelligence and interrogation personnel. His studies were followed by a series of Army assignments that had nothing to do with his new skills; by the time he would have been deployed overseas, the war was over.

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Shortly thereafter, now married, Pipes entered Harvard, where he eventually took a Ph.D. in Russian history and where, with interruptions, he would spend the remainder of his academic career. His reflections on this long immersion in the precincts of American academe are without illusion. "The university," he writes, "turned out to be a microcosm of the society at large, and the quest for knowledge by its faculty was closely tied to personal advancement and the craving for fame." No less trenchant are his comments on academic self-regard at a rarefied place like Harvard. After he received tenure, one colleague privy to the review proceedings remarked to him, without a trace of irony, "You have no idea how close it was; on the knife's edge: on one side Harvard, on the other utter darkness."

Pipes's rather detached view hardly prevented him from participating in and excelling at the academic game. His zest for it, however, seems to have ebbed decisively after the self-imposed "reforms" introduced by the student uprisings of the late 1960's. He puts it this way:

> [After the 1960's] Harvard . . . began to view itself as an agent of social change and increasingly devoted itself to solving society's problems: instead of acquiring knowledge, no matter how esoteric, and teaching it to its students, it emphasized outreach. Rather than select its faculty and students solely by criteria of talent and creativity, it pursued sexual and racial diversity. Elitism, even when it involved exclusively intellectual excellence, was frowned upon. Much of what Harvard now did reminded me of the early Soviet educational experiments which aimed at breaking down the isolation of institutions of higher learning and harnessing them to the cause of social reform.

Still, however far American universities would stray from their fundamental purpose, Pipes's own scholarship proceeded unimpeded. In the decades to come, he would publish volume after towering volume on Russian history. The most notable are *Russia Under the Old Regime* (1974); a two-volume biography of the anti-Bolshevik reformer Peter Struve (1970, 1980); and, above all, *The Russian Revolution* (1990) and *Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime* (1994).

In these works, Pipes emphasizes the persistently weak hold of liberal Western ideas on Russian political culture, and the continuing appeal of authoritarian notions and practices. Specifically, he rejects the notion, beloved of Russian nationalists, that Communism was an exotic import that somehow seized control of an innocent and unwary civilization, and that the atrocities committed under Lenin and Stalin were whole-cloth exceptions to long-established political traditions.

Needless to say, these views provoked considerable ire, including most famously on the part of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. I once heard a Russian émigré refer scornfully to Pipes's work as "the Polish version of Russian history." Pipes is forthright here in defending himself against such implied accusations of antipathy toward his subject. To be sure, he writes, he feels "no sympathy for Russian nationalism and anti-Westernism, which provide a convenient bond between authority and the uneducated masses." But, in general, "I draw sharp distinctions between Russian governments and Russian people, and further, between educated Russians and the population at large." And when it comes to a passion for Russian literature, "I almost feel Russian."

If sometimes attacked by the Russian nationalist Right, Pipes has been much more conspicuously a major target of the American academic Left. It is easy enough to see why. Not only is he incorrigibly outspoken about the evils of Communism, but he is no less critical of the fruitless academic search for a "moderate" version of Communism that, but for the machinations of a Stalin or a Lenin, might miraculously have brought socialism to Russia without the Gulag and all the rest.

The collapse of the brief-lived Provisional Government of 1917, for example, is attributed by some historians wholly to the anti-democratic maneuverings of Lenin. Pipes will have none of it, pointing instead to Premier Alexander Kerensky's spineless pandering to the Bolsheviks and their allies. By separating the Provisional Government from other truly moderate and democratic forces, Kerensky exposed it ineluctably to the tender mercies of the Reds, for whom no concession would ever suffice. When the October putsch came, Kerensky's regime was naked and defenseless.

In his role as a public intellectual, Pipes further enraged the academic Left by courageously taking on the entire school of Soviet studies that emerged in the United States in the early 1970's. The principal emphases of this school were on the supposed similarities between the U.S. and Soviet systems of government, the essentially benevolent or defensive goals of successive Soviet regimes, and the need for the United States (and the West in general) to come to terms with Moscow regardless of its actions at home or abroad. These beliefs were proof against all evidence to the contrary. "Nothing," Pipes writes caustically, "not even travel to the Soviet Union or the appearance in the West of tens of thousands of Jewish refugees with their own tales to tale, could sway the Sovietological profession in its opinions, because here science coincided with self-interest."

Perhaps as a corollary to his battle with the Sovietologists, Pipes was asked in the mid-1970's to join the so-called Team B. This was a group of experts appointed by the

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Ford administration to study and offer an alternative to the (often deeply flawed) assessments of Soviet capability produced by the CIA. His conclusions from that experience were summarized in two influential articles in COMMENTARY: "Why the Soviet Union Thinks It Could Fight and Win a Nuclear War" (July 1977) and "Team B: The Reality Behind the Myth" (October 1986).

Under Ronald Reagan, Pipes deepened his acquaintance with government by joining the White House as a member of the National Security Council. Even here, however, where he was supposedly surrounded by other committed cold warriors, all was not well. Like many academics who temporarily enter government service, Pipes was shocked by what he found. Secretary of State Alexander Haig's principal concern, he writes, "was not with the substance of the country's foreign policy but with his personal control of it." As for the State Department itself, "whenever I visited [there] on business I had the feeling I was entering a gigantic law firm that abhorred confrontation with any foreign government and firmly believed that all international disagreements could be resolved by skillful and patient negotiation." One result of this tour of government duty was *Survival Is Not Enough*—a polemical volume that, appearing in 1984, served as a salutary antidote to the current of appeasement then at its peak in American universities, churches, and media.

NOW IN his eightieth year, Richard Pipes can look back upon a life rich in achievement and adventure, both personal and intellectual. Although he owes much to the United States for rescuing him and his family from certain death in World War II, he has repaid that debt in more than equal measure. *Vixi* is the fascinating story of that mutual enrichment—a story, one feels sure, that is far from over.

We mourn the death of

David Bar-Illan

1930-2003

Irreplaceable tribune of Israel, galvanizing spirit, peerless friend.

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John E. Chubb is chief education officer, Edison Schools; distinguished visiting fellow, Hoover Institution; and member, Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12- Education.

The increasing demand for charter schools, and the educational options they provide, has been elevated by the belief that urban schools need dramatic improvement. But why hasn't this push produced more results? **The story of five forgotten schools serves as one example of the hypocrisy of some school reform**—opponents of major change claiming they want to improve schools but being satisfied with merely blocking change.

In December 2000, at the prodding of former mayor Rudolph Giuliani, the New York City Board of Education made national headlines by initiating a bold reform to improve five of its most chronically poor-performing schools. The schools were to be partnered with a private manager to turn them around. Edison Schools, Inc., had been selected, after a lengthy review process involving multiple applicants, to run PS 161 in Harlem, PS 66 in the Bronx, and MS 320, MS 246, and IS 111 in Brooklyn.

But there was one stipulation. The parents at each school had to vote to approve the initiative. In no time local activist organizations and the city teachers union, all with vested interests in keeping the schools under direct board control, launched a noisy campaign of misinformation, denouncing Edison as a profiteer, the mayor as an enemy of public education, and the board as a bunch of backroom dirty dealers. The initiative was voted down in all five schools.

Lost in the debate was the tragic disservice these schools were doing to children. In January 2001, while activists were defending the schools against outside intervention, the schools were quietly failing most of their students. On average only 19 percent at each school achieved proficiency on the New York state reading assessment. Of course, the protesters promised to work for the schools' improvement after the voting was over.

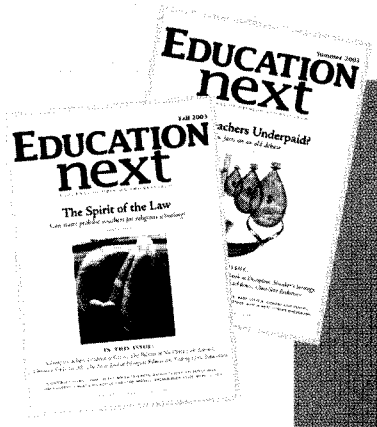
But what happened? One school, IS 111, was closed and another, MS 320, was reconstituted. **The four schools that remain open in their new or original forms continue to fail their students miserably.** Two years later reading proficiency rates have improved only 4 percentage points on average.

Meanwhile, Edison has been working with community groups elsewhere in the state—the Bronx, Buffalo, Rochester, Albany, and Riverhead—to open six charter schools. These schools serve children with high levels of economic need whose test scores two years ago looked just like the scores in the five New York City schools. But today, those charter schools have taken their students to promising heights, raising their state reading scores an average of 17 percentage points. One has to wonder whether this kind of progress could have come to the five schools, now sadly forgotten, in New York City.

The New York City Board of Education has been dissolved, replaced by direct mayoral control of the schools. The new chancellor, Joel Klein, is not beholden to any of the groups that squelched the partnership with Edison. The politics of school reform now hinges on the support for Mayor Mike Bloomberg, who appoints the chancellor. Thus far Chancellor Klein has shown tremendous resolve to buck the status quo, maintain a focus on children at all costs, and embrace ideas his predecessors found too hot to handle. For the sake of the hundreds of troubled New York City public schools, let's hope he keeps it up.

— John E. Chubb

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University



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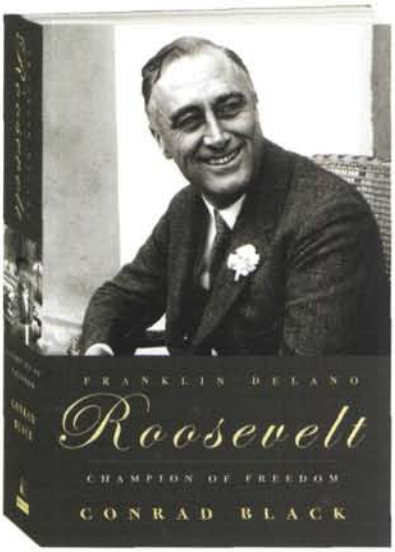

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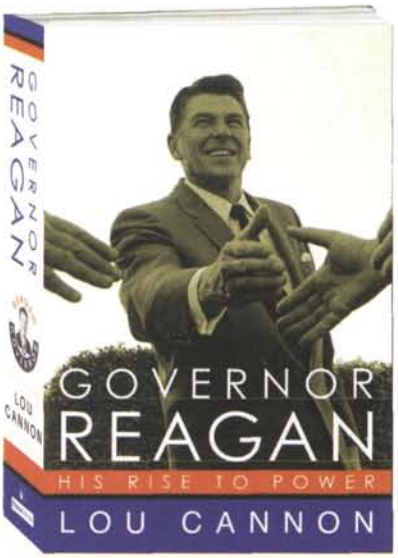

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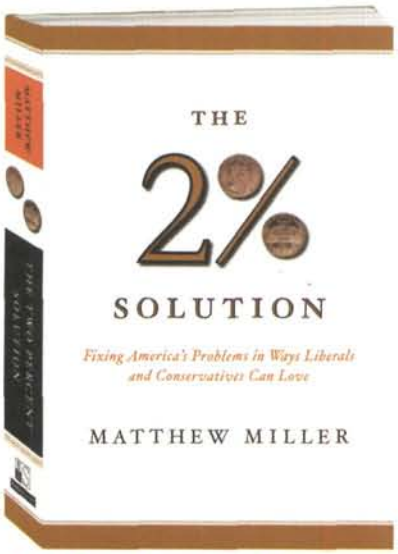

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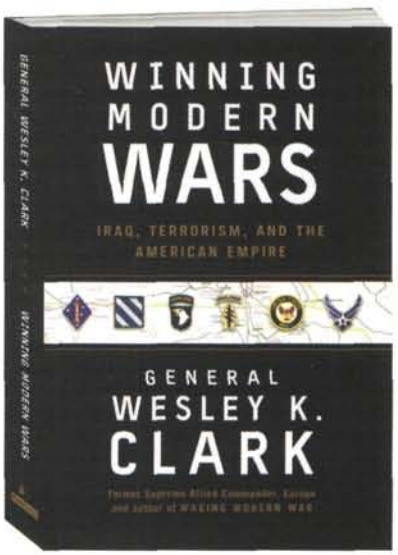

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